1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

and may devote his time to his bride. He further alleges that the young couple do not exhibit their affection in public, but that one may conclude from various signs that mutual affection continues even in advanced age. Jealousy, however, often comes into the open, and women are particularly suspicious of their husbands. The usual factors leading to the disruption of a marriage are cited as disagreement over the upbringing of the children, idleness of either party, the disputatious nature of the women, or the irascibility of the men.

Sexual relations are maintained during menstruation; Schebesta mentions the fact that the only restriction is during the final stage of pregnancy and for several months following childbirth. In some regions, he adds, there is also a restriction on sexual intercourse between the husband and any woman following the birth of a child to his wife. Such a statement evidently implies an acceptance of extramarital intercourse in other regions, yet he also claims that adultery is considered as a moral transgression offending the divinity; when committed with a married woman, it is criminal. Some allowance is made for a man who cannot have relations with his wife (as during a period of sex taboo); intercourse with an unmarried woman is then generally not considered as adultery. An itching body and birth of twins are, among some

[P. 181- D]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Mombu FO31
Lese

183 (A)

[ARCHERS]

[P-183-A]

P M 784 177

nent among the many archers who had hastened to attend the funeral took charge. He measured the corpse with his stick and drew the outline of the grave on the ground. His son, assisted by others, opened a grave, using pointed sticks, a hatchet, and a bush knife, and cleared the loosened earth with their hands. The crying

P [152]

of the women became louder, calling *"Afael"* (father). A few women sat nearby, singing dirges. Not only the relatives mourned, but all present. With the help of the Lese *kerl*, the

P M [608]

floor of the grave was covered with sticks, then leaves. The womenfolk hurried to the edge of the grave as the corpse, decorated only with an arm ring, was brought through a hole in the side of the hut and placed in the grave. The wailing

P [152]

reached its climax; the wife, children, and even the eldest grown son, threw themselves on the ground as the men began to fill in the grave. One man had to hold the eldest daughter to prevent her from throwing herself into the grave. The earth was stamped down, and the mourners moved away, women and children and some of the young men crying. One daughter remained near the grave as the house was pulled down to cover it (after the household goods had been removed).

Shortly after the burial some men went off hunting. By three o'clock the entire camp was deserted, and a new one had been built by evening.

[NET HUNTERS]

764 miles away. There was some suggestion that the Mbuti should be buried in the village of his patron, but the eldest son refused and said that the forest was his father's "earth," and this was where he should be buried.

The grave was dug by Mbuti and villagers, about 4 feet deep, with half of it 1½ feet deeper. The body was placed in the deep section, on its side, facing north, covered with sticks and phrynium leaves. Then everyone threw in earth and filled the grave. The women at the funeral became hysterical at this point, falling to the ground and beating themselves. The dead man's second wife tried to throw herself into the grave on top of the body. When the grave was filled, everyone sat down and talked and smoked. The youngest son of the deceased had been playing around quite happily all the time. After smoking, villagers and Mbuti all washed their hands and feet in a nearby stream.

• 152 Both Patrick and Anne Putnam claim that there is, among the Epulu Mbuti, formal and controlled wailing, also wailing as a manifestation of genuine grief among both men and women. Men and women will weep apart during

[179] [1] Suggestions of this kind are sometimes made by the Mbuti in their village context, in imitation of the villagers. They by no means necessarily indicate Mbuti belief.

[P 223-B]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 223 - C]

the official wailing, as well as before or after it. 152

Anne Putnam (1954, 77) mentions the opinion of a Pygmy hunter concerning the village custom of burying the dead in a cemetery. He is reported as saying, "There the ground locks everyone's arms together and it isn't comfortable." 764 829

She also refers (1954, 81) to village speech-making following a burial, during which the cause of the death is hinted at. On one occasion, the death of a young Pygmy girl in the village, the villagers attributed the calamity to the evil-eye and roused a relative of the girl to vow vengeance. The next morning, however, the Pygmies all went hunting, despite the assurance of the villagers that it was dangerous to go hunting for three days after any death and that no game would fall into their nets. Four antelope were caught. 763 761 [754] 765 179 224

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

In the absence of any "elder," it is difficult at first to understand the legal system and how it functions. From the examples cited, however, it appears that one of the first rights of every Mbuti is the right of self help, but because of the nature of the band in which he lives it is unlikely that any serious dispute will remain restricted to the original participants and left to them to settle. Such can happen, and has, but usually the dispute is widened, involving more and more of the others and, finally, the whole band itself, until a settlement is reached. 627 578

Thus in a case of incest between members of the same lineage, the first act on the part of the girl's family was to pursue the boy, threatening him with knives and spears and driving him from the camp. There, they said, he could die. He would get no shelter and no food. Returning from this chase, they promptly tore down the house of the boy's "father" (actually his father's brother, with whom the boy was staying). As far as the offended family were concerned, the matter was finished, but the "father" thought otherwise and threatened to take counteraction. At this point, while the womenfolk on the girl's side were making the usual demonstrations of grief (throwing themselves on the ground and beating themselves) and the men on both sides were brandishing spears, knives, and bows and arrows, the dispute degenerated into the practical consideration of where the houseless "father" was 627 684 [52]

[P 230-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 259-C]

lage often comes to an end. After a few days or weeks of drinking and dancing, one evening the drum-dance is replaced by song, probably a subdued hunting song sung by a group of dejected-looking Pygmies sitting around a fire in their village camp. They get increasingly melancholy until one evening, probably a day or two after they have stopped drum-dancing, they start singing *molimo* songs. The next morning they are suddenly full of life again, and, despite all protests from the villagers, they pack their few belongings and return to the forest, singing loudly as they go.

The evidence considered suggests that there is a dissociation of two sets of values for the Mbuti—those that apply to the village and those that apply to the forest. The two sets of values, corresponding to two worlds, are accompanied by two modes of behavior. It is a case of culture contact without acculturation; such villager institutions as the Mbuti seem to adopt are adopted and are significant only with reference to their village life. The relationship between the two people is, on the one hand, characterized by various attempts to formalize it through trade, participation in various ceremonies and activities, and, on the other hand, it is characterized by a sharp opposition of two different sets of values. This opposition is an opposition of the forest to the non-forest; the humans, to the animals; the Mbuti, to the villagers.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

with which the body of the villager is treated before burial. Owing to my somewhat peripheral relationship with the villagers I was not allowed to witness the more intimate rituals when the *karé* Mbuti was closeted with the deceased on one occasion for about three hours, on another occasion for one hour. Nor was I able to elicit much from the Mbuti, who said that they knew nothing about it, and only did what they were told to do by the villagers. When asked what that was, they repeated the above information, which was as much as I had gathered from the villagers, and no more except a few colorful and imaginative details about the appearance and odor of the corpse. This being clearly something better investigated from the villager side, I did not press the matter. It seems sufficiently well established, however, that the ritual connection between *karé* is considerable as seen by the villagers, and this was borne out on one occasion when an important Bira noble died and the entire funeral ceremony, including the burial, was held up for a day and a half because of the non-appearance of the dead man's Mbuti *karé*. On this occasion the Mbuti eventually arrived on the run carrying a spear, loudly shouting his complaints at being brought from the forest for such stupidity (again the term *mbafu*). There were several hundred villagers assembled, and the Mbuti ran through them to the compound of the deceased. He evidently knew in advance what was expected, and broke his way in to the closed hut where the widows were wailing. There was great concern among the villagers because he took his spear with him, and they said he might kill the women, but they did nothing to prevent him. Happily there was a full complement of widows at the subsequent burial.

The villagers recognize that they cannot force the Mbuti *karé* to fulfill their obligations by political or economic pressure, but they now have another weapon. By the act of ritual circumcision, according to tribal lore, the Mbuti are placed in a direct relationship with the tribal village ancestors, and by the *karé* bond each Mbuti is placed in a direct relationship with the protective spirits that look after the welfare of their respective individual villager partners. Every step of the *nkumbi* reinforces the authority of the tribal ancestors, through the supernatural powers at their disposal, over the Mbuti as well as over the villager initiates. Failure to fulfill "kinship" or *karé* obligations on the part of the Mbuti cannot be dealt with by the legal mechanisms available to the villagers, but it can now be countered by supernatural sanctions. Villager lore defines the Mbuti responsibili-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

[R 108-L]

15. Village women of Epulu dance to celebrate an approaching ekumbi during which only Mbuti boys will be initiated, owing to lack of village boys of the right age.

16. A boy, just circumcised, is comforted by an Mbuti hunter. This would be considered a lasting shame by either a village boy or an adult, but the Mbuti see no shame in acknowledging and healing pain.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

In intercourse the only restriction I could discover was some rather vaguely stated prohibition on a boy holding his partner in his arms. Some adults say that this prevents conception, others say that the girls take contraceptive medicines. Whatever the reason, there is no documented or even reported case of pregnancy arising out of intercourse in an *elima* hut.

The *elima* is given wide publicity (unlike the villager practice) and young men from neighboring bands are expected to come and participate. If they are whipped during a visit to their band by the *bamelima*, then they are obliged to return the visit. The latter part of the festival is the time when prospective suitors are sought, though there is still no feeling that betrothal must necessarily result. At this time even the younger married men may enter the *elima* hut, though they will sleep with the senior girls rather than with the *bamelima*. It is nothing unusual for the husband of the provider of the house to do this, nor for an elder brother of one of the *elima* girls themselves. But at this time the younger boys are kept out.

Access to the hut may still be had by being whipped, but now there is an additional possibility. In the late afternoons the mothers gather outside the hut, with their carrying baskets, and with a good supply of sticks and stones and any other suitable ammunition. Any youth that wishes to declare his affection for one of the girls is free to attempt to enter the hut, but he must run the gauntlet of the women, who are perfectly capable of beating him soundly and even of throwing him in a river if they do not consider him suitable. Depending upon how well they favor him they will let him pass with anything from token to stiff resistance. If the resistance is stiff the suitor may use his bow and fire fruit peel or small pebbles with it, and fight the women back in this way. When the women become particularly aggressive the youths make a combined attack.

Minor injuries are frequently sustained, and the Mbuti say that in the old days the "war" used to be real, with arrows used instead of peelings. The important thing is that it is still impossible for a youth to enter the *elima* hut, at this stage of the festival, if the older women decide against it for any reason.[9]

Once inside he still has to face the girls, and the same conditions as before pertain except that if he is allowed to sleep with a girl and

[9] The drama not only appears like a reenactment of the proverbial "marriage by capture," but some Mbuti say that they used to have to fight and carry off their brides in this manner.

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

584 small it will wish a boy to stay or a girl to bring her husband to live
591 with her. If the band is large, however, it will prefer to lose a member.
621 If the marriage is within the band, and the band is large, the couple may still go to join another band, the choice of which being determined by size again, more than by any other consideration. The presence of friends or relatives and knowledge of the territory are important but secondary considerations. This question of residence falls primarily upon the hunters to decide; the elders have little to say.

DEATH

761 602 [177] In death, the final crisis of the life cycle, we again see a lack of emphasis on kinship, though once more perhaps we should bear in mind that the contact between the Mbuti and the villagers has undoubtedly affected not only kinship and ritual terminology, but also kinship relations and ritual practice. Be that as it may, in the present context, death is of immediate concern to both the nuclear family and the whole band. For the nuclear family, and for other members of the
761 family who have during their lives been close to the deceased person,
• 152 it is an occasion for grief. This grief is freely expressed by young and old together, and may at times become apparently uncontrollable. In the same way that the Mbuti are given to excessive bursts of laughter, often developing into near hysteria, so when they weep they do so with what amounts almost to violence. Children of the deceased,
761 763 152 without regard to age or sex, begin weeping the moment they hear the news of death, or as soon as a sick person indicates that he is not going to live much longer. If news of sickness or death reaches a relative some distance away, the relative will shout and yell rather than weep, and will continue this way until he reaches the camp where the sick person is lying. Immediately on entering the camp he will burst into tears, and wailing loudly will enter the hut and throw himself on the ground at the bedside of the dying person. Sometimes a close relative will injure himself with self-inflicted knife wounds, or by tying a halter around his neck and trying to strangle himself. Others pay little attention to these demonstrations of grief and I have never seen
[889] any serious injury result. Elders look on, however, with some disapproval, and will intervene if there is any danger of such injury.

763 152 The rest of the adults in the band will sit around outside their huts, watching the wailers run in and out of the sick person's hut, and while they themselves are likely to be serious and upset they are also likely

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

to make jokes at any excess of zeal on the part of any mourner. Young children continue playing as though nothing were going on; youths sit morosely by themselves, or wander off into the forest on foraging expeditions.

The moment death occurs there is a renewed burst of wailing, then the camp begins to quiet down. In the forest the practice is to scratch a shallow hole in the floor of the hut and bury the deceased person there, pulling the hut down over the grave. The camp is then abandoned, nothing being left to indicate the grave site, nothing being buried with the body except maybe a few very personal belongings such as bark cloth, bracelet or necklace. All other property is divided before the camp is abandoned. If death takes place in a village, then the Mbuti leave the funeral arrangements in the hands of the villagers.

If death occurs suddenly, the same procedure applies except that the period of wailing is shorter. In either case burial takes place the same day, if enough daylight is left, or as early as possible the following day. During burial, either in the village or in the forest, there is likely to be a final outburst of wailing from the relatives, particularly female, and some may try to throw themselves into the grave. In the village the eldest son is the chief mourner, and is supported by either a friend or another relative, younger or older.

In the village the entire band takes part in the burial procession, and those who dig the grave, under villager supervision, are youths and not necessarily connected in any way with the deceased, other than by band membership. They laugh and joke, sometimes even when the body is being lowered into the grave. Mbuti elders only take exception to this if they see that it is annoying the villagers. On the other hand if the formal wailing becomes too loud and enthusiastic, as the villagers like it to be, the elders object strongly. Particularly do they object to excessive demonstrations of grief from anyone who is not a close relative. Their main objective, it seems, is to restore "quiet" to the camp as soon as possible. The moment burial is over only the genuine sobbing of the immediate family is permitted in the forest, and this may be heard coming from their huts at any time of the day or night, never in public. In the village, however, there is still an obligatory mourning period, and about three times each day, for about two or three days, sporadic formal wailing breaks out in the village camp.

If a child dies the grief is less widespread, and in the case of a very small child the camp may not even be abandoned; only one hut will be pulled down and deserted. The child may even be buried within

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

of the most dramatic festivals possible. The *molimo* is not concerned with the death of the individual, nor with securing safe passage for the soul, but rather with affirming a belief in life and in the continuity of life and in the continuity of the band, despite the fact of death.

It seems, from inquiry in all parts of the forest, that there were many different ways of burying the dead and that no uniform custom existed; rather that, as now, each band had its own preferences. The most common method now, and apparently in the past, is simply to pull the hut down over the corpse, the body having been buried in a shallow pit dug in the ground or simply left on the bed, covered with leaves. In some bands the hut is then burned, in others it is left, but the general practice is to move camp at once. If it is too late to move that day, the family concerned will sleep out in the open until they are able to build a new hut in the next camp.

On some occasions bodies are buried up in trees, and in the south-eastern region of net-hunters this is how the Mbuti say they dispose of dead lepers. Nearly all Mbuti say that in the old days they buried their dead in holes in the ground, filling the holes in afterward so that the animals would not find the bodies. Today it is usual, throughout the forest, to wash the body before disposing of it in any of these ways. But this, and other practices such as scenting the corpse, wrapping it in a cloth if one is available, raising and lowering it three times before burial, and orienting the body in its resting place, vary according to the practices of the local villagers, and are almost certainly to a large extent borrowed from them. The Mbuti seem impatient and unconcerned about such details, and if they attend to them they do so only perfunctorily. They are particularly reluctant to allow anything of any possible value to be buried with a body, and if the burial takes place in a village and the villagers insist on using cloths and sleeping mats, the Mbuti will do their best to retrieve these unseen, at the last moment.

Similarly, head-shaving seems to be of little significance to the Mbuti, though they frequently do shave when a member of the band dies. But, unlike the villagers, they are not consistent in the practice, and they leave their hair lying around where it has fallen to the ground, whereas the villagers are scrupulously careful to collect their own hair cuttings, which they take off into the forest, or to a stream, and secretly hide.

The explanation given for self-mortification is that all the immediate family feel responsible, to some extent, for a death in their midst.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1985 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

765 152 midst. Family members also openly comment on all the things they should have done for the dead person but did not do. At times when one individual is particularly repentant, such as one old lady I saw who tied a noose around her neck, others will assist her. In this case the old lady was attacked by her own family, some of whom jumped on top of her, beating her to the ground, others grabbing the rope and tugging it, tightening the noose around her neck. There was never any question, however, that this was anything but a histrionic display. On a different occasion, when another old lady started stabbing herself with a knife, the band looked on unconcernedly because even when the blood was flowing freely they knew she would come to no harm; she was merely scratching the skin.

761 765 By contrast there is no actual attempt to lay the blame for death at any individual's door. The occasion may be made one for blaming people for not having behaved as they should have behaved, but death itself is accepted by the Mbuti as being perfectly natural. It does not [783] seem to be thought of as unclean or contaminating, and there is no purification ritual, or any ritual to speed the soul of the departed on its way. On one occasion a procession of Mbuti returning from the burial of one of their band proceeded directly to the wedding of an- [594] other member. The nuclear family concerned is under no restrictions, only under heavy pressure to forget the death as soon as possible. In wailing, instead of using the dead person's name the mourners will refer to him as "You who died in the morning," referring to whatever time the death took place. Those in the band not immediately related will not refer to the dead person even in this indirect way.

765 462 In various parts of the forest there are tales of a custom whereby female relatives of a dead man used to close the trails leading to the camp and guard them, wailing and singing. Anyone wishing to pass had to pay by leaving an arrow in a piece of soft wood left there for the purpose. Among the Budo, in the north, this is known as *unai*, and the net-hunters in that region call it *butuma*. They say that while the girls are wailing and singing the men are silent. After a week the girls stop and the men take over and sing joyful songs. The women's job is "to remember," they say, the men's "to forget." The Budo and Mbuti insist this is an old Mbuti custom. (Among the Epulu Mbuti it is certainly true that most of the wailing is done by women, but it is not formalized in this way.)

[152] [171] Among the Lesé the same custom is known as *ofa*. They say their women wailed for two or three months, and during this time the men

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 462 152 [171]

became bitter and went far away until they had killed and eaten someone. Their bitterness then left them and they returned and the *ofa* ended. The Mbuti archers in this region deny they do this, but agree that it is a woman's job to wail. A man's job is to hunt. A man will say, "We are glad you are dead, now you can guide us to good hunting." (The Epulu net-hunters claim to say the same thing when the *molimo* is over.) Some Lesé refer to the same custom as *chachima*.

765 462 171

Over to the east, I found that the Plains Bira have a similar custom called *masoso*. Among the Forest Bira it seems to be a part of what they call their *molimo*. Again the women of the family are expected to wail formally and to exact tribute from visitors coming to the village of the deceased. The men argue about problems of inheritance, and conduct the burial and purification rituals.

765 764 621 594

Among all the villagers it is stressed that any such death ritual concerns only the family of the deceased. Whatever other similarities there may be between their practices and those of the Mbuti in this connection, a restriction on participation along kinship lines is not one of them. For the Mbuti a death is mourned and grieved by any who have reason for feeling a personal loss. This means primarily the immediate family and age mates. These are the people responsible for the disposal of the body, though others will help if help is needed. The band as a whole reacts to the loss however, and it is the responsibility of the band as a whole to celebrate the death in such a way as to restore the normality of life. This is the *molimo*.[5] [561]

[5] The wider structural significance of the *molimo* is discussed in the last two chapters, "Principles of Organization."

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

of the youths will put it across his shoulders and take it back to the camp, or it will be divided on the spot. Such division, however, is not considered final, and further sharing may be demanded on return to the camp if the hunt was not fully rewarding.

The system of sharing is nowhere the same, and the frequent interchange of visitors between hunting bands renders sharing even more complex. Each band, however, will state certain rules, and will not hesitate to override them in order to bring about the recognized goal—equitable distribution of the spoils, with special consideration for the owner of the successful net and for anyone who contributed to the kill by using or lending his spear, and so forth. Elders and children are allocated certain parts of each animal, and this helps to insure that these nonhunters are cared for adequately, though their friends and kin will always provide them with more if needed. If the hunt is so successful that game falls into every net, then there will be no sharing, though there may be exchange simply for the sake of preferences of taste.

This is not to say that sharing takes place without any dispute or acrimony. On the contrary, the arguments that ensue when the hunt returns to camp are frequently long and loud, and appear to be almost deliberately sought. One such example is when someone will invoke the rules of sharing of another band, where perhaps she or he may have a relative. Indeed it is remarkably seldom that the Mbuti will admit to having had a completely successful hunt. As a result, the return of the hunters is the inevitable signal for personal grievances, however far out of context, to be aired and expressed in terms of sharing rights. There is no formal settlement of the dispute, but invariably there is a compromise and there will be an exchange, at least, if not a sharing. This is undoubtedly an important outlet for petty hostilities and jealousies, which are automatically kept well within bounds by the very fact that, whatever the nature of the original dispute, it is made to relate to the hunt. No dispute can be allowed to threaten the co-operative pattern of the hunt, for subsistence depends completely upon the continuation of such close co-operation. This is of course particularly true among the net-hunters, whose hunting technology demands larger bands and closer and more constant co-operation between band members.

Following is an example of different rules for the distribution of game:

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

it, the children standing guard at the net or at the fringes of the hunt), nonetheless the nuclear family is divided in the hunt, and both men and women are forced to co-operate with their neighbors, who may or may not be kin. The hunt above all is not an individual affair but involves the band as a whole, as is borne out in the ultimate disposition of the spoils.

That the net-hunt is regarded as a matter of importance to the forest, regarding the forest in a religious sense, is evidenced by the hunting fire, the song and the dance, rather than by any elaborate ritual, purification, or sexual taboo. The close relationship between the hunt as an economic activity and the hunt as a religious act is seen in the widespread custom of rubbing ashes from charred forest woods into the skin, sometimes slitting the skin first to achieve permanent tattoo marks. This is stated to secure the protection of the forest.

Whereas I was never able to secure confirmation of Schebesta's description of food offerings being made to the forest, except through villager informants, there is very definitely a strongly felt and stated urge to use every part of the animal, and never to kill more than is necessary for the band's needs for the day. This in fact may be one reason why the Mbuti are so reluctant to kill an excess of game and preserve it for exchange with the villagers. There is no expression of joy in the capturing and killing of an animal, though the excitement still runs strongly. The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behavior. On the other hand, a bird caught alive may deliberately be toyed with, its feathers singed off over the fire while it is still fluttering and squawking until it is finally burned or suffocated to death. This again is usually done by youths who take the same nervous pleasure in the act; very rarely a young hunter may absentmindedly do the same thing. Older hunters and elders generally disapprove, but do not interfere.

The respect seems to be not for animal life but for the game as a gift of the forest, and a gift that may be withheld if abused by waste. It is further considered that good hunting is essential to the success of either an *elima* or a *molimo* festival, and during such festivals certain hunts are devoted expressly to supplying the festival with food.

Among the archers, the system of sharing game and the respect for game are comparable in their political and religious connotations:

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

particular asset in the hunt. This was his world. He had little or no interest in the village.

Njobo, on the other hand, was excellent at dealing with the village and seemingly enjoyed it, for brief periods. He was much closer to the Nambikwara, who "delights in responsibility" and who "finds enough reward in those burdens that their fellows shy away from" (*ibid*). Although his wives were successive, it is worth mentioning that his penultimate wife, mother of his crippled son, was not remarried and was still considered by all, including Njobo, as his senior wife. Although she lived with her natal band, she sometimes visited Njobo (particularly when he was in the village), and he also visited her, at which times they acted in all respects like man and wife. Njobo refused to allow her to live with him in the forest hunting camps.

Njobo's father, Biyonga, had not been outstanding in any way. He had been dead a number of years, and nobody seemed to remember him for any particular qualities.[1] Njobo, on the other hand, was among the finest hunters, and unique in having killed, single-handed, four elephants. He had also participated in successful communal elephant and buffalo hunts, and apart from being a hunter of the utmost courage, he was also a man of the utmost integrity. He possessed, in abundance, all those qualities the Mbuti admire most except a good singing voice. He himself was modest, and usually self-effacing in the hunting camp. He came to the fore in relations with the village, and frequently acted as "headman" of the band in that respect. However, if ever he spoke too loudly in camp, he was either shouted down or laughed at; ridicule he accepted and even welcomed. I only heard him make a retort once, when reference was made to his son's inability to walk without a stick. He said, "It is never good for one man to talk too much, particularly if he is right. But if an Mbuti has something to say, what else can he do?"

Njobo had no brothers, but his sisters had produced a number of children, several of whom, married and single, were members of the same band. The only sister who was in the band was a widow, and her children were elsewhere. She acted as mother to all her nephews and nieces, among which were two youths, cousins to each other, and each recently married. When Njobo was away from the band for a

[1] Although there was a general reluctance to mention the dead by name, or even to talk about them, there was no rigid prohibition. It was a question more of there being no particular occasion for such mention. If Biyonga had been exceptional in any way, it would certainly have arisen sooner or later in ordinary conversation, and equally certainly in response to questioning.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

When Njobo was away from the band for a number of months with his son, these two nephews moved in. Normally they were not resident. Asuku brought not only his wife but also his father. He insisted on Njobo's wife looking after them, building their hut and so forth. Although Asuku was not liked, he would have been tolerated had he not tried to assume the status of Njobo, but this assumption moved him into an age group to which he did not belong, and he was consequently always being shouted down.

On one such occasion, Asuku was annoyed at the hunt for not leaving as soon as he would have liked. He strode up and down, telling everyone that they were lazy. When they shouted him down, he told them he was Njobo's son, so "I *am* Njobo, and this is Njobo's camp." When he was ignored he then turned from one great hunter to the other, and they all ignored him except one, who placed a stick on the ground at Asuku's feet and said, "There is a stick; if you are so big, pick it up and hit me." Asuku then turned to the elders, and Moké, the most influential of all, laughed in his face. At this, Asuku entered his hut and stayed inside for the whole day until dark.

On another occasion Asuku tried to say that his net was Njobo's net, and he was therefore entitled to Njobo's position in the hunt and should not be out on the fringes. He had chosen a time when his mother, Njobo's sister, was visiting, and the hunters did not want to make a dispute of the matter in front of her, out of respect for Njobo. However, one of them, Njobo's paternal cousin Manyalibo, went up to Asuku and said that if Asuku wanted that position it would mean setting his net next to him, and if that happened he would set up his net alone rather than stay in the hunt. This temporarily checked Asuku, and that evening old Moké gathered the senior hunters around him and, for once not smiling, he raised his arm and pointed across the camp to Asuku. This is considered a grave indictment, and the whole camp fell silent. Moké, very quietly, and talking as if only to the hunters but never lowering his arm or taking his eyes off Asuku, said, "That is a completely bad man. I have been watching and I have seen with my eyes, and my spirit [*roho*] makes me speak. He makes noise all the time, and he is the cause of all the noise in the camp. I would like to throw him out forever. But he is a relative of Njobo, and we should wait and see—and watch. That person is a child and has no right to share conversation with men. He is not of us. He comes from far off. I don't like people from far off. They are bad for any camp; they kill any camp completely." He then changed his attention and pointed at Ekianga, the other hunter of

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renown, the man with a troublesome trio of wives, himself a frequent cause of friction in the camp. Shaking his finger at Ekionga, Moké said, "And that is a man, completely clean. He pleases my spirit [*roho*] very much."

After the evening meal Moké stood in the middle of the camp and pointed to the hearth of each great hunter and male elder in turn, naming them, and saying, "This is my man, this is my hearth, for it is his hearth; but it is not Asuku's." He even pointed over to Cephu's camp, and included Cephu. He then went back to his hut, leaving Asuku at the central fire with two elders.

Despite this display of disaffection, however, Asuku remained on. He had not only been pointed at, but named in public, and another had been named as good while he had been named as bad—a double disgrace. Ridicule, after this, was pointless, and although everyone wanted to be rid of Asuku, their respect for Njobo, coupled with Njobo's continued absence, prevented them from doing more than ignoring the offender as far as possible. After some three months, however, Asuku began to frequent the village for long periods. Although this meant he was at least not in the camp, which was thereby much improved, the hunters found this the ultimate insult and disloyalty. When he refused a summons to return to the hunting camp, old Moké once again stood in midcamp, an honored position from which any Mbuti, young or old, is free to claim the attention of everyone. He said that since now Asuku had become a villager, he was no longer an Mbuti, no longer "ours"; he belonged far away, very far away indeed. Pointing to the central fire in the section of the camp that included Njobo's wife and three great hunters, and divers others both related and unrelated, he said, "This is a matter of the forest. This is our hearth. It is Njobo's hearth. It is not Asuku's hearth. He belongs in the village or completely and absolutely far away."

There were murmurs of assent from everyone, and Moké looked around to each individual hearth, asking, "Is my spirit [*roho*] right?" Agreement was unanimous, though subdued, and Moké simply said, "*Asi-to*"—"It is finished." The next day word was sent by a youth to Asuku's father, in the territory of Effundi Somali, a few miles on the far side of the Epulu. I was told that the youth simply gave a verbatim account of what had happened. Asuku never returned to the Epulu band, and left the village, returning to his father's territory.

His cousin, Mbuaka, was not such a stranger in the band, but soon after his marriage, and some six months after the Asuku episode, he

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began more and more frequently to talk from midcamp. Like Asuku, he complained about laziness and bad hunting, common enough complaints but seldom aired from midcamp. When he began to claim special attention by virtue of being Njobo's "son," however, he was promptly ridiculed. People stopped listening to him, even from midcamp, and dared him to name them—a procedure that commands attention. Even unmarried youths called out, "Your noise will kill us all," and children began to imitate his whining voice. Masisi, a cousin of Njobo and, with Manyalibo, about to move from the status of hunter to that of elder, took Mbaaka aside at one point and talked to him quietly, recalling what had happened to Asuku.

Seeing that Mbaaka at last had begun to listen to reason, his brother, who up till then had never interfered, made a loud and rude joke that brought the whole camp down with laughter, then said, "Everyone is crazy—I'm going to sleep," and promptly went to sleep. Masisi then returned to midcamp with Mbaaka and said that if anyone else tried to be funny he would turn himself into a villager and bewitch everyone. A youth took up the thread and said that the village was responsible for all the noise anyway, because his girl friend never listened to him any more and was a bad cook (a typical pygmaean non sequitur). This rather forced good humor persisted throughout the next day, with the women telling jokes and laughing loudly the moment the conversation drifted in the direction of Mbaaka's former complaints. There were a few more remarks to the effect that the village was indeed responsible for all the noise, and the rest of Mbaaka's stay (two further months) was unmarred by any repeated claims to privilege through kinship to Njobo.

It is plain, then, that while any movement toward individual authority, conscious or otherwise, is sharply countered, and while individual authority is virtually nil, there is nonetheless a clear basic framework to support the values of the hunting band. There is the division of leadership, according to field, throughout the entire band, yet there is the midcamp site from which anyone may harangue all present. Although he has no means of compelling attention, it is generally accorded, and may be further compelled by pointing to or naming the individuals concerned. Further it is plain that the elders, including those hunters whose position is being gradually taken over by their children, act as final arbitrators, always careful to stress that what they say is a matter of their opinion, or of their heart. Only when unanimity is beyond question is an opinion or an action con-

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554 627 [178] [152] sidered "pleasing to the forest." Asuku had placed himself, physically and morally, beyond the forest.

In the two instances cited so far, although the kin relationship of 602 Asuku and Mbaaka to Njobo was the source of their claim to special 604 554 privileges, this was recognized as a village attitude, and a valid village argument. It is noteworthy that the details of the relationship were never spelled out once, except by Asuku and Mbaaka. The attitude of all the Mbuti was one of respect for Njobo, but of equal recognition of all those who shared the same central hearth, including some who were not even affines. It was stated very clearly by Moké [621] that though Asuku was a member of the band by virtue of having shared the same hearth, he had no more privileges than anyone else of that hearth, and was under the same obligations of respect and responsibility to his elders.

554 602 There was one other elder who could claim the same respect as Moké, by reason of age, and that was Tungana. But Moké had the added advantages of being a widower and virtually unrelated to any- [608] one in the band. He claimed fictitious relationship with Tungana, it being said that the same foster mother fed them both, and he frequently gave Tungana's "clan" name as being his own. Clan names [614] were seldom mentioned in disputes, except in a village context, and even then they in fact referred to a unit that was either nonlineal or cognatic, and not confined to one clan. Rather than differentiate be- [621] tween lineal units, the Mbuti used the concept of the hearth (*kuma*). [354] Each family had its own hearth, but there were also several central hearths, each shared by a number of families.

602 621 [354] Each camp, except the smallest, was distinguished by several such central hearths, effectively breaking the camp into subcamps that usually revealed a line of fission or fusion, but which frequently ran counter to all kinship considerations. As far as the Epulu band was concerned (and I believe this to be true of many other bands), authority was again, as with other aspects of life, more associated with age and territory than with kinship. Each section of the camp was, 621 in a limited sense, a political unit, and sometimes disputes would 578 remain confined to one section without spreading to others. A man 626 could invoke kinship or friendship to go to the aid of a disputant in another section, if he wished, but somebody like Moké was even more free to wander wherever he liked. The rules of self-help among the Mbuti are quite simple. It is perfectly proper to hit someone with • [152] anything wooden; it is not at all proper to draw blood, nor to hit any-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1961-1966) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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one on the forehead, which is considered a dangerous spot. In the frequent marital disputes, any man who hits his wife on the head or in the face promptly loses any sympathy he might have had from his fellows. A dispute that follows such lines almost invariably ends with an elder, male or female, physically interposing himself between the disputants, who then revert to hurling abuse which becomes more and more exaggerated until it is so humorous that even they join in the laughter. Alternatively they may lapse into a sulk, which will last for the rest of the day and through the evening, but will be gone in ample time for the next day's hunt to take place as though nothing had happened.

If a dispute becomes widened in scope, however (and this is generally achieved by one of the disputants naming someone, either in his own support or as a supporter of his antagonist), it will ultimately involve the entire subsection of the camp, and quite possibly the whole camp. In either case the process is the same. Whatever the cause of the dispute, it is still regarded as essentially the concern of the individuals concerned. Rather than attempt a probably impossible reconciliation of the excited participants, the rest of the band joins in an effort to divert attention away from the actual cause of the dispute. If this fails, they attempt to dissipate the blame by raising all sorts of minor but associated disputes, so that a number of people become involved. If blame still seems inescapable, the camp clown is likely to try and take it on himself, or else it will be put upon him by the others. The disputants, in my experience, accept this device as a genuine solution. There is no attempt whatsoever, nor have I heard of it in other bands, to make any restitution other than verbal.

As already mentioned, a dispute may be stopped simply by making life intolerable for the disputants by miming them and throwing them into ridicule. If these measures fail and the dispute persists, the hunting automatically suffers, and if no reconciliation is effected, the band splits, either forming two subsections or remaining as a single band, with the splinter section joining another band, at least temporarily.

Not only is the attachment of blame avoided or dissipated as rigorously as possible, and restitution largely ignored, but punishment is almost completely unknown. There are one or two instances where a youth might be thrashed by communal decision, but they are rare and foreign to Mbuti nature. Closer to an indigenous system of pun-

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meaningless trivia. Such disputes I have put in a class by themselves, though wherever a deeper underlying dispute was known to have lain behind an apparently trivial dispute, it has been classified accordingly.

DISPUTES CONCERNING FOOD

1. A mortar was borrowed by Njobo's sister, Teningbengé, from Amaloku, Amabosu's wife. There is no kin relationship. Teningbengé's subsequent cooking did not please her son (Maipé, actually her nephew), who complained that the mortar must have been dirty. Amaloku, who by then had retrieved the mortar, said that on the contrary it was the food put into the mortar that was dirty, and not the mortar itself. Maipé promptly seized a log of wood and started fighting with Amabosu. Amaloku and Teningbengé fought with sticks. Amabosu's mother, Sau, joined the fight, against her daughter-in-law's oldest sister, old Asofalinda. The dispute remained thus confined and was watched with much enthusiasm and laughter by the rest of the camp until Ekianga, brother to Amaloku and Asofalinda, stepped in and stopped the fighting by seizing the sticks and logs and throwing them away. Everyone returned to his hut and continued the evening meal.

2. Masisi, a great hunter, complained that the hunting was bad and said the band should move to the village and eat there. His cousin, Manyalibo, moved to midcamp and began a tirade against Masisi and everyone else for always complaining there was not enough food. He cited ten antelope caught that morning as evidence of the good hunting, and said that everyone should be happy and should be making the forest happy by singing, with so much food. And if they wanted more food they should hunt more and make the hunt even better. He said that if Masisi's noise continued he was going to leave.

Moké then took his place and quietly told everyone that nobody should leave for anywhere, that nobody could deny that the hunt was reasonably good, and that therefore the forest was pleased. If they moved or made too much noise it would be displeased. The forest would be happy if the whole band were to set out the next day on the biggest hunt of all. Then when the weather was better (it had been raining for some days, always a cause of discontent and discomfort) and nobody was making a noise, the whole band could move wherever it liked (knowing that in such a mood it would move fur-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1960) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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ther away from the village, and thus further away from a source of friction).

There was no singing, but it was done as Moké suggested. Murmurs of assent came from all over camp, with both Masisi and Manyalibo agreeing loudly.

3. Particularly at the beginning of the honey season, when tendencies to fission are already well marked, disputes over food, particularly over hunger attributable to poor hunting, are made occasions for enlarging the rift between the camp segments. Thus one day old Tungana's younger son, named after his distant relative Njobo, came flying back from the hunt in hot pursuit of his wife, Nakoranja. Nakoranja, much to everyone's surprise, had lost her bark cloth and was holding a leaf in front of her private parts, occasionally removing it to emphasize her cry of "I am naked!"

Having made her point she disappeared into her hut and modestly continued her description as to how her husband had torn her bark cloth off to shame her because she wanted to join her "sister" (who was a member of another segment), Ekianga's youngest wife. Young Njobo, standing outside the hut, told the camp that his wife was useless on the hunt, that she could not run as fast as even the slowest animal and let them all escape. Now they had no food and they would be hungry all day. Evidently she could not run as fast as her husband either, for he had caught her and given her a sound beating, ripping off her bark cloth when she tried to escape. He did not deny this, and Nakoranja said that this entitled her to pack up and leave.

Evidently this was something that had been brewing for some time, and when the hunt came back and it was seen that the dispute was forming along the line of fission, Tungana intervened and said that there was no sense in everyone making so much noise, that the next day he and his wife were going to leave for the village, and that young Njobo and Nakoranja were coming with them to look after them. The discussion immediately turned to the dangers of the trail, with the two segments siding with each other in common and equally insincere but polite opposition to Tungana's suggestion.

4. At a later stage, when fission became inevitable, discontent being so high that the sections were not uniting in the hunt and therefore not getting any meat, old Moké intervened. He stood in midcamp and harangued each section in turn, facing it and naming its members. He emphasized that this was the honey season and that hunting should be stopped anyway, and everyone go to the forest in search of their honey trees, "you in this direction, you in that."

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year. While Manyalibo's crime was serious enough, desecrating the forest in the honey season by hunting for the villagers, Masisi's was equally, if not more, serious, in his attitude to the trespassing bands. The night before Cephu joined him, Masisi was made the subject of discussion, from the middle of his own camp, by several youths and young hunters. They all asserted the right of their in-laws to enter their own territory, to hunt or gather honey, whether they were wanted or not. They agreed that permission should have been asked first, but that in light of the surplus of honey in the forest it was hardly necessary. The discussion ended by everyone agreeing that all the noise[8] of the past weeks was plainly the fault of the villagers who wanted the meat that caused the rift to begin with. This decision was followed by a plea from Masisi for much singing to make the forest happy again. The honey songs were immediately taken up with renewed vigor, and Masisi was prominent in maintaining them right to the end of the honey season.

6. Largely through preoccupation with Cephu, Manyalibo and Herafu, with the Effundi Somali band and now yet another trespassing band from the neighboring Eboyo territory, Masisi's camp had several days with little honey and little food of any kind. All men in the group took turns in stating their complaints from midcamp, each promising to find out who was responsible and threatening to name them. On the fourth successive day of such "noise," the singing having deteriorated, much to the disgust of the youths and the women, Masisi was particularly irritable and began a long harangue about how bad the whole thing was, including his present camp, and saying that he could name those who were responsible for it all being bad, but instead he was going to name those who must go out the next day and collect lots of honey and make it well again. He then named all the hunters. But he continued arguing and, getting more and more irate, began to imply that those he had just named were in fact those responsible. There were growing murmurs of protest, which only excited Masisi further, and there would almost certainly have been a fight had it not been for the intervention of the youths and the young women. Two of the women and one youth seized the *ngbengbe*,

[8] "Noise" is a direct translation of the word *akami* in the local dialect of KiBira, or *kuiele* in KiNgwama. It is used in ordinary parlance, but always with an unfavorable connotation. It is given special significance by adding the comment that noise is bad (*sinema*). This is tantamount to a moral judgement, invoking the supernatural sanctions of the forest, for noise is also said to kill the forest (*akami a mu nduva*), just as it is said to kill the hunt ((*akami a mu mukira*).

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wooden clappers used only for the accompaniment of honey songs, and started clapping them vigorously while singing. Masisi found the competition too strong, shrugged his shoulders, chased the women away and, taking a pair of *ngbengbe* himself, joined in the singing.

The next day the men and the older youths went honey gathering and brought back enough honey to send some as a gift to Cephu.

7. Laziness is highly criticized among the Mbuti, and is always related to hunger. It is one of the few qualities (noisy hunting is another, "blindness" in the honey season a third) that is countered by public assertion, in mime, dance and song, of the opposite value. One morning, shortly after dawn, there were murmurings of discontent because of the dampness of the forest, and suggestions that there was enough food in camp to allow for a day without hunting. One of the older hunter's wives stalked out into the center of the camp and began an elaborate wordless mime, showing that she was not going to be lazy and stay behind and play and dance "empty" games and dances. She was going to take her husband's spear and go off and hunt (she reenacted a successful hunt) and return with lots of food and share it all around and make her *roho* good and make the forest happy. Then when *she* sang and danced, it would not be empty.

It was a good show, and the whole camp looked on and laughed, then went hunting.

8. One morning, at the beginning of the honey season, a number of hunters set out, as usual, at scattered intervals. Several seemed to be staying behind, so I also remained. After about half an hour the hunters returned, one by one throwing their nets on the ground in the center of the camp. When they were all back, a bachelor youth who had gone with them began a tirade against the hunters who had stayed behind. Hearing his voice, and wondering why he was taking such a prominent part in a hunting issue, women began sleepily coming out of their huts. It was evident that too many had decided to stay home, and the hunt had not had enough beaters. The youth, Pepei, not only criticized the women as lazy animals for not coming on the hunt but also criticized the rest of the hunters, pointing out they had been even too lazy to send their sons with their nets, and had left people like himself, an orphaned youth, to do the work of men.

The hunters had nothing to say, but the women responded vigorously that they were not going to carry nets and spears for the men, they had work of their own to do, and that if enough youths had

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someone's hut.[8] The woman would be roundly criticized, and maybe named. Pepei was either ridiculed or caught by other youths and given a mild thrashing with a thorny branch. But that did not stop Pepei, and at one time he was becoming such a nuisance that there was considerable discussion as to how to deal with him.

One morning a leg of meat was found missing from a rack where it had been smoked in readiness for a visit to the village. The owner of the rack had been one of Pepei's most outspoken critics, Makubasi, a son of old Tungana. Pepei, incidentally, was a discriminating thief, and he was generally tolerated because his thefts frequently operated as unofficial sanctions against people who had incurred public disapproval for some reason or another. However, Makubasi was a highly respected member of the band, and Pepei had overstepped himself by committing a theft that could not be construed as a mark of disapproval of some mild misdemeanor on someone else's part, but that was plainly an act of personal vengeance. Instead of thrashing him, Makubasi simply pulled down his meat rack, tumbling it into the fire below and burning it along wit' what was left of the meat. It was a dramatic gesture, and although his wife was seen to sneak some of the meat out of the fire before it was consumed, it was an effective move.

Makubasi's mother collected all the meat she and Tungana had, brought it over and threw it on the ground in front of Pepei's house, saying it was a gift for animals and insects, and for Pepei to eat it if he wanted. This was too much for Pepei, who started crying and saying how terrible it was to be an orphan. Everyone ignored him and for the rest of the day not a word was spoken to him. The meat lay rotting outside his hut, where it remained until consumed by animals and insects.

That evening, again at dark, a peace offering of cooked food was brought to Pepei by Sau, the old "witch" from whom he most frequently stole. Thus did Sau, like Masisi, restore harmony and *ekimi* (quiet) to the camp.

[8] The acknowledgment of theft as a crime might well be taken in support of Nippold's (1954) contention that, together with other hunters and gatherers, the African pygmies, and the Mbuti in particular, have a highly developed sense of private property. It is a debatable point, and largely a semantic problem, and if labored too much only obscures the essential structural fact that regardless of the extent to which property is "privately" owned (and if it is, where are any corresponding patterns, let alone laws, of inheritance?), the obligation to share is an important recognized value, recognized in practice (cf., constant reciprocal prestations). There is frequent show of reluctance, but

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sion, during which any latent dispute might be aired. I could not definitely trace any heightening of reciprocal prestations between the individuals concerned, but it could have taken place in divers ways without my knowing it.

12. A number of disputes arising over food indicate trivial domestic disagreements, and seldom reach major proportions. A wife is late in cooking her husband's food, or cooks it badly; he spills some precious oil or fails to catch any game on the hunt. Such disagreements are confined almost entirely to the younger married couples, and they usually settle them by beating each other. If the beating gets too severe then the older women intervene, slapping both boys and girls soundly. If a marital dispute is more serious it may still emerge through a trivial incident in the hopes that it will be settled peacefully. If it is ignored, or mistaken as another petty squabble, then a more serious incident has to be created.

Baumbao, Tungana's eldest son, was having trouble with his wife, Tabakali. She was frequently away, back with her parents, and was suspected of having innumerable liaisons with other men. Baumbao said that this was particularly bad because of the *molimo* that was going on at the time. She had changed her hearth when she married him, and was now a member of this hearth, and she had to contribute to the *molimo*. He first brought the issue up simply by accusing her of cooking badly, and slapping her so hard that an old widow intervened, hitting Baumbao on the back with a burning log. Then everyone agreed that Tabakali was indeed a bad cook but that Baumbao knew that when he married her.

Baumbao took drastic measures. He took down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying that the *molimo* was empty. He said he had dreamed that his dead sister, Beselinda (naming her), had appeared to him in a dream and told him it was time someone made a good *molimo* trumpet and stopped using drainpipes.[1] She told him to make one and, having made it, to use it and then keep it carefully and not let it rot. He had done this and had been supplying

[1] As described elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961), the Mbuti on one occasion made use of some metal drainpiping they found in the local administrative center. Recognizing its musical potentialities, they stole two lengths and used them as *molimo* trumpets. Everyone agreed that the main thing was that the sound was undeniably good, but the more conservative elements strongly felt the lack of the identity between the conventional trumpet (made of a forest wood) and the forest itself.

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time. They sleep together every night. Why do they not make up their minds and get married? Then Madyadya can have Appiamomba's sister for wife and there will be no more noise."

The next day the issue was taken up by the elders, who gathered together and called on Appiamomba and Mebupepé to say what they wanted. The question of relationship was quickly dismissed by Tungana saying that nobody knew whether Kayo and Ebundu were brothers or not; who was alive to know, so what did it matter? It was "completely far away." The only question remaining was one of intent, and all the elders agreed that the children had been troubling their parents and spoiling the hunt with their noise, and that they must make up their minds and either get married or stop playing around. Appiamomba seemed unsure and said he would ask Mebupepé in his own time. Mebupepé, under pressure, denied that she loved Appiamomba and said she did not want to marry him at all, or indeed have anything else to do with him. She burst into tears and ran to a friend's house.

This relieved the tension somewhat, but Tungana brought up the fact that there were far too many young people around who should be married, and he started naming them. Each in turn began to state his case, but various jealousies quickly came to the surface, and fighting broke out among the youths and their girl friends. Tungana and Moké shrugged their shoulders and retired to their huts, sitting outside and watching with interest. The parents mostly left the scene completely. Manyalibo loudly complaining that the noise would kill him completely. Ekianga remained and tried to restore order, but quickly became involved himself. He shouted for Kengé to get a stick and beat some of the youths away. Kengé shouted back, "Later," and ran to join the other uninvolved youths on a hillock, to get a better view.

By evening the fight had ended, and everyone was too exhausted to renew any discussion. Moké and Tungana suggested it might be good to break camp and go and visit the village for a few days. Kengé said he thought this was an excellent idea, for then all the girls could sleep with the village men and that would keep them quiet for a time. He diverted the conversation to a discussion of village sex techniques, and the camp quickly regained its good humor. The next day half the band left for the village, the rest going further off into the forest. Without exception, the five young couples in question were divided by this move, though nobody referred to the fact.

17. A recently married Mbuti girl, while in the village, slept with a

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Everyone was tired of disputes in the camp, and they turned on Kengé and told him it was he who was a bad husband. He promptly said, "I shall tell my mother; I shall tell her everything, and she will come here." His mother was notoriously argumentative, and the thought of having another disputant on their hands was too much. There were unanimous shouts of disapproval, whereupon Kengé said, "So you let the Lesé Mbuti join empty Cephu in our territory, Cephu who always hunts against us and should be turned out completely and forever, yet you do not want your own mother-in-law to come and live with you. What kind of Mbuti are you?" He went inside his hut and after a few muffled cries and sounds of blows, there were other sounds, less offensive, and in a half hour or so Kengé and his wife came out together, making a great show of friendliness, peering into Mbaaka's hut and laughing loudly at them for fighting so much.

DISPUTES CONCERNING TRIVIA

A headache, a hungry stomach, a painful leg, a leaking hut or a damp forest—almost any kind of discomfort is likely to make an Mbuti irritable, and he will pick a quarrel with ease and readiness so that he can make his heart feel better, as they say. It is known to be bad to keep things concealed, so there is no particular disgrace in voicing suspicions and revealing antagonisms, particularly if it is done quietly. Few, however, managed to make their heart feel better without creating a great deal of noise and making everyone else feel considerably worse.

Most such disputes, and there were likely to be several every day, died as they began, in complete indecision. The following are typical instances:

26. A small girl, playing in imitation of the boy's *nkumbi*, playfully whipped some of the men, including her uncle, Masalito. Masalito was enraged and hit her, which started a fight between his age mates—that is, the young hunters.

27. Pepei fought another youth with sticks because the other told him to beat the *banja* sticks, and Pepei said he was not a woman to be ordered around. Tungana's wife then beat Pepei, saying that women do not get ordered around, only children, and that is why nobody will marry him.

28. Kengé beat his sister because she caught cold.

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an

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29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an administrator there who took her photograph. Masisi demanded the money, and the girl said she did not ask for any. Masisi's wife said the girl was a fool, that she could have got fifty francs. In fact, she was a thief because she deprived everyone of cigarettes. The girl was still standing up where she arrived in camp, and Masisi's wife went up and forced her to sit down, and thrust her private parts into the girl's face as a gesture of contempt. The girl's parents said nothing.

30. A man burped loudly during the evening meal, and brought forth insults from all sides that would have developed into a fight had Moké not taken the *banja* sticks and started beating them, a sign for the *molimo* singing to begin.

31. A girl, decorated with leaves stuck in her bark cloth, was dancing vigorously and some of the leaves kept falling out. She blamed the younger children and started beating them until they fled, crying. Nobody interfered.

32. Amabosu, for no known reason, refused to allow his wife to move the fire from their hearth when changing camp. She went to her brother's hut and sat there sulking for nearly a whole day. Amabosu, fed by his mother, paid no attention.

33. Occasionally, however, even the most trivial origins can lead to a serious and lasting rift. Such a dispute, described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 6), involved two brothers, Aberi and Masalito. It started when Masalito went to visit his brother on a rainy day. Masalito was in the main camp, Aberi in Cephu's camp. Aberi was asleep, and his wife insulted Masalito twice, first by refusing to smoke the same pipe, second by offering him an old and dirty pipe-stem to take back to the main camp with him. This led to a fight between the two brothers which was temporarily healed by the force of ridicule levelled against Aberi, and further subdued by the action of the *molimo* in beating Masalito's hut as a sign of the displeasure of the forest.

However, the bad feeling remained, if hidden, until Aberi's death.

DISPUTES CONCERNING THEFT

Theft, apart from the kind practiced by Pepei, was unknown except in the village context. Sometimes when Pepei was caught he was thrashed; on the other hand, sometimes he was tolerantly laughed at and allowed to go his way. There was once, however, a curious case that was never settled.

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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use of the village fear and respect for forest spirits, but it also makes use of the village love for asserting their superiority and their paternalism. It even makes use of the village concept of kinship obligations, and the respect and obedience owed to a grandmother.

The occasion on which the legend was told was the return of Cephu to the camp, after a short absence in the village, laden down with village foods. It was known that he had gone empty-handed, and it was equally known that he was not on good enough terms with any of the villagers to get such a handout for nothing, that he was too lazy to have worked for reward and too wary of pursuit to steal. However, theft seemed the only answer, so he was asked from whom he had stolen the food. Always a great dramatist, Cephu told the following story in answer, and it quickly became a favorite.

"I am only a poor Mbuti; the forest is my father and my mother. But my village master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted and I hunted. I caught *sondu* and *lendu* and *mboloko* and *sindula*, and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh *mongongo* leaves and put it all in my basket and set off for the village."

This much everyone knew to be completely false, but the implied ridicule of the villagers who would believe it was not lost.

"But on the way I saw a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to escape but he caught up with me and demanded the meat. I said, 'No, this is for my master. I cannot give it to you. You may take all my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally I managed to escape because I am strong, and a great hunter, and I ran on toward the village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things to fight. They would kill any villager; only we Mbuti can deal with them. But then I saw the spirit again, and this time he was more clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother.

"'A'i, Cephu, where are you going with all that meat?' she asked me.

"Now, my grandmother died many years ago and I had to be polite to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, an Mbuti, my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager. I pleaded with her and begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me and how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me,

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(*ndura nde bokbu*), and if pressed begin to enumerate the totality of their experience. Primarily, however, they refer to the forest as mother or father, according to context. On the hunt the men address it as father, the women as mother. A man receiving a sudden unexpected favor, as he sees it (coming across a cache of highly prized mushrooms), is apt to address the forest as mother. A woman who is having a hard time finding the leaves or saplings she wants will, getting into a tangle of undergrowth, almost certainly start addressing the forest as father and accuse it of being far too severe and strict. The terms are so widely and frequently used that I have no means of saying which is the more prevalent. If anything, I would hazard a guess that "mother" is used more often than "father." The Mbuti themselves say that which term they use and when is a matter for their *roho*.

The extent to which the Mbuti personify the forest is seen when in explanation they say that the forest gives them not only food and shelter, warmth and clothing, but also affection (*ndura pisasu bendu, pisasu isa, pisasu ngombe; ndura ekondisu*). The intimacy of the relationship between the individual Mbuti and his forest godhead is most plainly seen in the incident described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 15), where a youth was found dancing all by himself in the moonlight, singing a wordless song as he danced. When questioned as to why he was dancing alone, he answered, "I am not dancing alone, I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon."[3]

3 *Kanga me bi akilé: me bi na ndura, me bi na songé.*

Schebesta (1952, 303) refers to *songé* (moon) as being one of the net-hunting names for God, regarded as the creator of all things (1952, 305), particularly of man, which *songé* creates by means of menstrual blood. He does not, unfortunately, give more information or documentation on this interpretation, but there is no doubt that the moon is, to the Mbuti, an object of interest and (as seen above) affection, and at the same time in common discussion they do connect the moon with menstruation, and menstruation with fertility. I have myself not come across any instance of the moon being worshipped as such, unless this moonlight dance be regarded as worship, except in one song of the *molimo*, the words of which were:

Ema songé, ema, ema; okisu ema; pika'i.
Mother moon, mother, mother, hear us mother; come.

This is remarkably similar to a translation given by Bowra (1962, 70) of a song of the Gabon pygmies cited by Trilles (1945, 157).

Moon, O mother moon, O mother moon,
mother of living things,
Hear our voice, O mother moon!
O, mother moon, O mother moon,
Keep away the spirits of the dead,
Hear our voice, O mother moon,
O mother moon, O mother moon.

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This was not an isolated instance, though such dancing and singing are generally confined to youths and younger married people. The erotic aspect of the relationship between forest and Mbuti is also seen in the very clear individual preferences for certain types of place in which it is found good to the *roho* to have sexual intercourse, such as by a stream, or in dark shade, or in a patch of sunlight or moonlight, or during the hunt, but in the forest rather than in the hut.

The perennial certainty of economic sufficiency, the general lack of crisis in their lives, all lead the Mbuti to the conviction that the forest, regarded as the source of *pepo* and of their whole existence, is benevolent, and that the natural course of life is good. The absence of magic is not necessarily an indication of technological mastery; in this instance it is simply an indication of the normal absence of crisis. We indicated that such magic as existed was not without its spiritual aspects, and might possibly be better classified as religion. For instance the use of vine and wooden charms on an infant to convey the strength of the forest to the child is not thought to achieve its end directly, by physical transference alone. Physical contact with these materials is considered strengthening, and certainly the juice of the vine in which infants are bathed is thought to have strengthening properties, but these things are also considered "pleasing to the forest" (*babongisa ndura*). This phrase constantly recurs, and shows the belief in the awareness by the forest of its "children" and their needs. Such acts and many others, by physically relating the individual to the forest, are believed to create an added awareness of the Mbuti by the forest. It is not only the strength of the forest that is wanted, but its affection.

THE POWER OF SOUND

Birth is attended with an undemonstrative concern to establish this relationship between the forest and the individual, and it is reinforced at puberty by what might also be considered in some respects as magic, but which is more essentially religious, and that is song. The mere attachment of a vine to the wrist or around the waist requires that amount of effort and no more. Song requires continued effort, is more direct and personal, and consequently more powerful—its goal is identical. Song above all else is believed to attract the attention of the forest, and to please it. "Sound is very strong indeed; noise is bad, but song is good" (*S'uti mota ningo'e, akami sinana'e;*

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An occasion such as that described (Turnbull, *ibid.*) for old Balekimito would lead to a greater *molimo* without any hesitation, however, for the death of this much loved old lady affected everyone's *roho*. On the other hand, the *molimo* held for Cephu's daughter Teresa was initiated by Njobo, Cephu claiming he did not have a trumpet. It was held not so much out of respect for the girl but because conditions were bad at the time, there being much sickness and discontent. However, Cephu did not seem to be pulling his own weight, economically, and so the festival came to an abrupt end after only a week. If people found their *roho* upset at all, that was more because of Cephu's cupidity than because of the death of his daughter.

To recapitulate the essential elements of the greater *molimo*, as held for Balekimito:

Death is accepted as a natural event and does not lead to any accusations of witchcraft or sorcery, except in the village context. Such grief as is expressed is genuine, and not formal, again except in the village context. It is accepted with regret, and although regarded as natural and inevitable, there is nonetheless a feeling that this is the one really imperfect thing in Mbuti life. The expressed belief that death comes when the forest is sleeping does not quite tally with the factual acceptance of death by the Mbuti, but there is absolutely no feeling of resentment or blame attached to the forest because of death. The felt need to "awaken" the forest and to "rejoice" the forest is occasioned more by the fact that all the living have been brought closer to death and have, to some extent, been touched by it. They consequently need reassurance, not only for the continuation of their own lives but for the continuity of the Mbuti.

The factual attitude to death is seen in the practice of burial, which in the forest is performed as simply and quickly as possible. It is prolonged and attended by ritual only in the village context (see p. 74 *seq.*, 143). Burial is primarily the concern of the immediate nuclear family, who may be assisted by friends or relatives. Too much display of grief is considered very bad, and one of the major concerns of the ensuing *molimo* is to reaffirm life. In a sense, then, the *molimo* is more properly associated with life, occasioned though it may be by death.

The burial over, the camp is abandoned and the mourners are at once under an even stricter obligation to minimize their demonstrations of grief. The opening of the *molimo* festival is informal and casual, and depends on how long it takes for the new camp to get set-

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is essential, and gathering, though done mostly by women, may also be done by men when opportunity affords. Perhaps the most significant activity that is generally performed by women is that of house-building. The only men I have seen build their own houses have been bachelors or widowers, and even then they will frequently get women to do this for them. The woman builds the house; she has the final say in selecting the site. She is in charge of the family hearth, where the cooking is done and around which the family eats and sleeps. Her husband may eat with other men at the central hearth, so the family fire may be said to be of major importance to her and her children. And it is precisely at the parental level that the personal terminology differentiates the sexes.

Looking for significant differences in attitudes and relationships between a child and its mother and father, it is plain that the mother is regarded as the source of food, despite the fact that the father is the prime force in the hunt. It might be worth mentioning again here that vegetable foods (entirely discounting village influence) form the bulk of any forest diet, and their nutritive value is probably equal at least to that of the game consumed. In any case, the father gives the game and any vegetables he may have gathered to his wife, who cooks the food and distributes it. A hungry child looks to any one of his classificatory mothers for food, not to his fathers. His most likely chance of finding it will be at the hearth of his nuclear family, but any mother is under as strong an obligation to feed him as the mother from whose stomach he came.

There is no doubting the difference in the emotional connotations of *ema* and *eba*, differences that are not found to exist in attitudes to the sexes at other age levels. *Ema* (mother) is associated with love (*ekondi*); *eba* (father) is associated with authority (*mota*). We have referred a number of times to the habit of the Mbuti addressing the forest as *ema* and *eba*, and although I can adduce no body of evidence to indicate on what occasions it is addressed by which term, it would seem to reflect the attitude of the individual at the moment of address, and the frequency with which the forest is addressed, as both indicate something of great importance in understanding the Mbuti value system, upon which social order so largely depends. The forest is not only the provider, it is also the ruler; it is to be regarded with affection and respect, and under all circumstances to be trusted.[3]

[3] Schebesta (1952, 340) asserts: *"Les noms attribués à Dieu relèvent de deux catégories. Ou bien on l'invoque simplement sous ceux d'*afa, bapapa, odu . . . *père, grand-*

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Another important aspect of the terminology is that it does not differentiate between cognates and affines, and is used to include all, without any distinction of this kind. In an Mbuti hunting band, a hunter may well have a uterine brother hunting to one side of him and his uterine sister's husband to the other side. He depends on each equally for both success and for safety, and any preferential behavior, such as might be signified in another form of terminology, must be avoided. To distinguish between cognates and affines in the daily hunting and camp life of the Mbuti, as to distinguish between matrikin and patrikin, or even between kith and kin, on any grounds except age and locality, is not only needless, it is destructive of the sense of unity that is vital to the close cooperative nature of Mbuti economic and political life.

Mbuti personal terminology, as in the more conventional kinship systems, equally reflects interpersonal bonds, then, but they clearly cut across all strictly kinship considerations. This can to some extent be construed as a denial of kinship ties, and it certainly implies that such ties do not form the basis of social organization in the band. But it is better expressed as a lack of concern for kinship that, whatever its origins, is particularly well suited to one of the band's major objectives, the preservation of the greatest possible political distance between itself and the village. It will be readily seen that whereas lineage considerations would divide the Mbuti, the generational system, if considered vertically, effects the widest possible classificatory unity from which the villagers are absolutely excluded. But for the moment to keep to the forest context, the same unity is in perfect consonance with the nonlineal nature of the band, the unity of which any lineal system would destroy. Here we have to refer to one other usage of the same personal terminology; namely, when the Mbuti refer to themselves as *bamiki ba ndura*, the children of the forest. This, together with their habitual reference to the forest as mother and father, extends the nuclear-family model to incorporate the larger

père, père des pères; ou bien on se sert de termes qui remontent à certaines représentations mythiques, et dont le nombre est très élevé." ("Names attributed to the Godhead fall into two categories. Either one simply invokes the name *afa*, *bapapa* or *odu* . . . father, grandfather, or father of fathers . . . or else one uses terms that derive from mythological beings, of which there are a very great number.")

This indicates the same filial attitude to the forest that I found among the net-hunters. Among the archers, I myself most frequently heard *afa*, used with the same degree of affection as *ema* or *eba*. However, among the archers I equally often heard the forest (God) addressed as *ema* (mother), rarely heard *bapapa*, and never *odu*. My participation in the religious life of archer bands, however, was limited.

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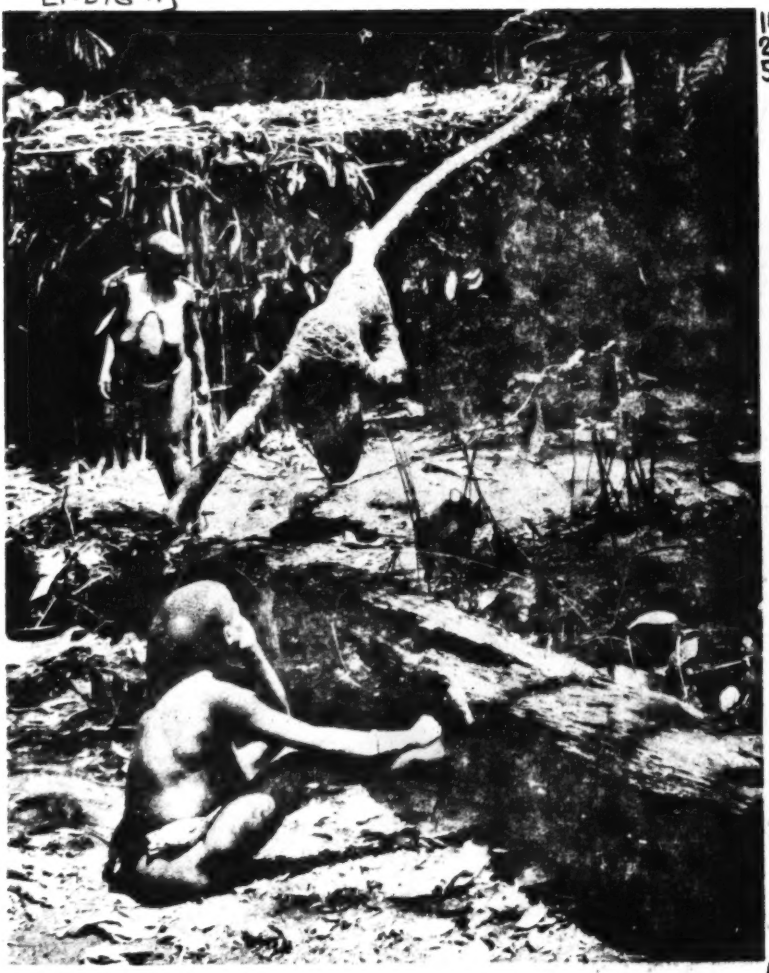
[P.276-A]



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27. A common way of showing displeasure is to sulk, talking to no one. A young girl here keeps her back to her husband, wherever he might be, and refuses to cook his food.

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Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted with regret, but there is enormous concern to conceal the regret and avoid any excessive show of grief, for crying is *akami*. The uncomfortable fact of death has to be obliterated from the memory as quickly and effectively as possible, and the band, which has received a blow at its strength, must be rejuvenated in an exaggerated display of all the things pleasing to the forest—good hunting, singing, dancing, feasting and, above all, *ekimi*. More than this, the *molimo*, as we have seen, is a means of reaffirming the effective division of the band into age groups, and through both the participation of the old lady, who demonstrates the power of the women over the men, and through the *ekokomea* dance, the lack of sex differentiation is emphasized. *Ekokomea* may also be regarded in a similar light as the erotic dance over the fire, where the men symbolically copulate over the scattered embers, fanning them to life. Certainly the sexual act is represented in the *molimo* dances, if not in the symbolism of the *molimo* trumpet itself and the way in which it is handled, and there is very evidently expressed concern with the regeneration of life.

The *molimo* is also an occasion on which the band reaffirms all its interpersonal loyalties, and its unity as a band, regardless of kinship considerations. (This is not to deny that the band, and the *molimo*, may at one time have had a more definitely lineal structure.) It is significant that it insists on participation by all adult males, including not only affines but adult visitors living temporarily with the band under an obligation, default in which is punishable by death. Such death itself is said to be brought by the *molimo*; informants differed as to *how* death would actually take place—some said by two spears, some by beating—but in all cases it was held that the *molimo* would bring death to any who did not fulfill his obligations.

Thus the forest is intimately associated with the Mbuti at death, just as it is at birth. The same forest that gives life and strength through the juices of the vine, and through the vine and wooden charms tied around an infant's wrist, may bring death to that infant, if as an adult he fails to rejoice the forest during the *molimo* festival.

Fire, which is the gift of the forest, but whose ownership is disputed, is central in the life of the Mbuti, representing life itself. (One legend has it that fire was first owned by a chimpanzee; another by woman; another by the *keti*. In any case, man [Mbuti] ultimately stole it and now possesses it.) During the *molimo*, men pass their hands through the flames and then rub gently over their faces. The *molimo* trumpet is passed over the flames. Sometimes men put coals

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the camp or on the hunt, and they also sometimes shout at a storm or at rain to drive away bad weather.

But more important than Mbuti recognition of the practical power of noise is their recognition of its social value. When they say it is the duty of the hunter age level to make noise, they mean just that, even though it is precisely noise that will negate the hunter's other duty, to hunt. The Mbuti do not connect the two duties—the one refers to the hunt, the other to camp life. It is in the camp that the hunter is expected to make noise; that is, to be disputatious. For the countervalue, *ekimi*, is only "quiet" and does not refer to silence (*kobinengo*), which is considered as an indication of great and imminent danger. A silent camp is considered a bad camp and the badness is destroyed by destroying the silence, which can be done in two ways. One is by singing, which is recognized as sound but only described as noise when it takes place in the village. Singing, as we have seen, is essentially a form of communication, even of communion, with the benevolent forest divinity. It destroys silence and "rejoices the forest" at the same time. But this is recognized as having only temporary efficacy. To strike at the roots of silence, one employs "noise" in the sense of argument, which is certainly its most common connotation.

Silence in a camp betokens unusual ill humor, which is common among the Mbuti when in their village camp, but not in the forest (except when the hunt is spoiled by rain). Disputes seldom remain hidden for long because of the intimate nature of camp life, but any length of time is too long, and when a camp is silent it is invariably the hunters who find some cause for "making noise." It matters little what they pick on, but it is preferably not the underlying dispute causing the silence. It may be directed at the cause if personal feelings run high, but then the hunters are criticized for making too much noise, *akami ndasi*. Youths and elders will alike shout at the hunters and tell them this, but the noise will not die down until the disputants have either come into the open with their dispute, putting it before the band, or have been forced to join together in some common but unrelated cause.

Thus there was an occasion on which Amabosu, for no evident reason, took to beating his wife, Amaloku, with unwonted vigor and regularity. A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back. But Amaloku was aware of the real reason for her husband's behavior, which was her own brother's

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deavor of this kind, however, is recognized as being fraught with difficulty, and there is another way that is both easier and more sure, for *ekimi mota* is produced by song. The process of "rejoicing the forest" is a process of creating *ekimi mota* where it does not exist, of intensifying mere *ekimi* through song.

The term for "rejoicing the forest" in the Epulu area is *bongisa ndura*. In KiNgwana the verb is either *furahisa* or *ponisa*, there being no precise equivalent to *bongisa*. *Furahisa* is closer to the English concept of joy, involving festivity; *ponisa*, however, means to cure. The KiNgwana words are both used by the Mbuti in this context, interchangeably, and the meaning of *bongisa* lies between them, derived as it is from *bonga*, meaning good, in an all-inclusive sense.

Perhaps the exact connotation of "rejoicing the forest" is best described by the process itself, which brings joy through joy. Singing gives the Mbuti intense satisfaction. They say it makes them feel good, in the sense of feeling joyful. The mood of song is joyful, even when it is a *molimo* song on the occasion of death. By creating a mood of joy within themselves the Mbuti convey that joy to the forest, which returns it, restoring *ekimi* or even *ekimi mota* to the camp. To describe song as mere "curing" would not quite cover the essential sharing process implied by the term *bongisa ndura*. Song is known, to the Mbuti, to have the infallible power of filling the forest with *ekimi mota*. It is sometimes described as being like the act of copulation in the moonlight, or wherever the individual talking feels that act to be the most intense and beautiful. The Mbuti say *"su bongisa ndura, ndura pisu ekimi"*—"we rejoice the forest, the forest gives us quiet." The distinction is simple, for joy is *ekimi mota*, an intensification of *ekimi*, and as such is not the norm and can only be temporary. Far more important to the Mbuti is that they should have, on a less temporary if less exalted level, the norm of *ekimi*.

While the forest cannot fail to be rejoiced by song, it may well, for one reason or another, be displeased, as a father may be displeased with his children (a perfectly common Mbuti metaphor), and withhold *ekimi* for a long time. The fact that singing brings joy to the Mbuti, filling them with *ekimi mota*, does not mean that it is not also hard work. For the forest is not content with one song. If singing is undertaken at all, and particularly if it is undertaken for purposes of restoring lost *ekimi* (i.e., if it is to be a *molimo* festival), it must be long and continuous. After a fest of singing every night, from shortly after dusk to an hour before sunrise, the Mbuti set off to hunt

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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123 It began to rain, and Njobo decided that he was not going to stay
304 and get wet, so he left. Moke was on the point of doing the same
when Kolongo returned. Obviously anxious to get the whole thing
[152] over with as little ceremony as possible and return to his warm dry
hut, he rubbed the black ash-paste hard into the cuts until it filled
them and congealed the blood that still flowed. And there it is today,
ash made from the plants of the forest, a part of the forest that is a
part of the flesh, carried by every self-respecting Pygmy male. And
as long as it is with me it will always call me back.

The women thought it a great joke when I finally got back to
camp, wet and still rather shaky. They crowded around to have a
• [152] look and burst into shrieks of laughter. They said that now I was a
[885] real man with the marks of a hunter, so I would have to get married
and then I would never be able to leave. Moke looked slyly at me.
He had not explained that the marks had quite that significance.

123 It was later that evening when the men were singing that I heard
533 the molimo. By then I had learned to speak the language quite well,
534 and I had heard them discussing whether or not to bring the molimo
out; there was some opposition on the grounds that it was "a thing
of the forest," and not of the village, but old Moke said it was good
for me to hear it before I left, as it would surely not let me stay
long away but would bring me safely back.

First I heard it call out of the night from the other side of the
Nepussi River, where three years earlier I had helped Pat Putnam
build a dam. The dam was still there, though breached by con-
tinuous flooding. The hospital where Pat had given his life lay just
beyond, now an overgrown jungle, only a few crumbling vine-
covered walls left standing, the rest lost in a wilderness of under-
growth. Somewhere over there, in the darkness, the molimo now
called; it sounded like someone singing but it was not a human voice.
It was a deep, gentle, lowing sound, sometimes breaking off into a
quiet falsetto, sometimes growling like a leopard. As the men sang

THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

hunter he was blessed with a large family. He had a powerful and penetrating voice, took an active part in any dispute, and usually managed to shout his opponents down, which is one of the chief ways the Pygmies have of settling a dispute. His family were all strikingly fine-looking, with almost Greek-like appearance although of normal Pygmy stature—under four and a half feet.

Most Pygmies have unmistakable features, other than height, that set them apart from the Negroes. Their legs are short in proportion to their bodies; they are powerful, muscular, and usually splay-backed; their heads are round and the eyes are set wide apart; they have flat noses almost as broad as their mouths are long. The head hair grows in peppercorn tufts, and the body hair varies from one extreme to the other—some Pygmies are covered thickly from head to foot. Another characteristic is the alert expression of the face, direct and unafraid, as keen as the body, which is always ready to move with speed and agility at a moment's notice. All these traits are uncharacteristic of the Negro tribes that live in the forest around the Pygmies. These tribes are a rather shifty, lazy lot who survived the ravages of Tippu Tip's slave-traders by treachery and deceit. In the villages you will sometimes find Pygmies who are like this too, but they are scorned by the BaMbuti who have remained in the forest and have refused to be settled.

Masisi's children had finer features, with longer faces and straight noses, and they were slimmer and less stocky. His eldest son, Ageronga, was a fine hunter and often used to take his father's place.

Another member of the same clan, a cousin of Masisi's, was Manyalibo. A traditionalist, he was older than Masisi, and the son of an elder brother of Masisi's father, yet he had less say in everyday matters because he was not such an active hunter. Nor did he have such a fine family. He had two daughters of his own, but no sons, and although he had adopted a distant nephew, Madyadya, the boy was proving a great trial, having been spoiled by everyone, as orphans

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

closed on hinges. The only other hut to have a door was that of Njobo, which was at the opposite end and also faced down the middle, but not quite so blatantly as Ekianga's. The rest had leaf-covered frames which were simply pulled across the opening to close it.

My house was built opposite Njobo's, with the old witch Sau and her son Amabosu to my right. At first the Pygmies were going to build me the biggest house ever built in the forest—bigger than Camp Putnam. We finally compromised and when the framework of interlaced saplings was finished I had two rooms, each about ten feet square. Even so, I knew it would never be finished, for by then the number of workers was dropping off rapidly; so I suggested mudding the walls of only one room, but leafing the whole roof so that our "village" would have a veranda. This was thought to be a fine idea.

One day I was on my way out to the plantation with Kenge, Manyalibo and Moke, when on the way we met Cephu's handsome nephew, Kelemoke, a very light-skinned youth who had two children even lighter than he. He was wailing and crying, and told us that Cephu's daughter, only a few years old, had just died. He then continued on his way, wailing loudly. I expected the others to turn back, but they continued as though nothing had happened. Kenge made some remark about Cephu's virility and the others snorted with laughter. Kenge had the charming habit of laughing at his own jokes, which seemed funnier to him the more he thought about them, so he was still clapping his side and doubling up and shouting to the forest what a funny joke it was when we reached the plantation. Then he stopped. Although we could see nobody, Moke called out quietly that Cephu's daughter had died, and Njobo and Masisi and a few others appeared from where they had been "working," looking rather cross at being disturbed. Njobo said it was a nuisance. The girl was his wife's niece, and this meant that his wife would keep

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him awake with her wailing and would probably forget to cook for him. He set off at once for the village, grumbling, and Moke went with him. Masisi started one of his loud tirades, saying in his sharp voice that Cephu never looked after his children properly, so it was no wonder they died. This must have reminded Kenge of his joke, because he started laughing again, or perhaps he was laughing at Masisi, but Masisi got angrier than ever and said he was going straight to the village to tell Cephu what he thought of him. He stamped angrily after Njobo and Moke, still shouting deprecating remarks about the bereaved father.

Kenge laughed happily and said that there was going to be a dreadful noise when Masisi got back to the village, so we would do better to stay where we were until it was all over. Manyalibo, who had not said a word, suggested looking for *itaba*, a sweet edible root, and with food our foremost thought we set off.

When we got back to the village in the late afternoon we found everyone sitting around outside their little houses, staring gloomily at nothing in particular. Masisi was still talking loudly, pointing at the sky and over in the direction of Cephu's camp, from which I could hear women wailing, and saying that it was a shame that Cephu should let his children die and cause everyone so much trouble. Tungana mournfully said that he didn't like funerals; the Negroes made so much noise at them. Masisi's younger brother, Mambunia, still a bachelor because one of his legs was crippled with paralysis and he was not able to hunt well enough to support a family, added in shrill falsetto that Cephu was so inconsiderate and such a trouble-maker that he would probably let his daughter die completely—completely and absolutely.

I did not understand what he meant at first, but it provoked an immediate response from Asofalinda, Ekianga's widowed sister. She strode across the camp, marching with long swinging strides to where Mambunia was sitting, his paralyzed leg stuck out in front

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of him. She pointed her skinny hand at him, flinging her arm backward and forward with every step, rhythmically enumerating all the reasons why he should keep his mouth shut. He was a great one at complaining about other people being trouble-makers, but he made more noise than anyone. Besides, one should never say that anyone had died completely unless they had died for ever.

Madyadya, Manyalibo's adopted son, lazily wandered in between them and spitting on the ground said that Asofalinda made a pretty good noise herself. Old Moke laughed noiselessly. Asofalinda strode back to her house and slammed the fine wooden door; Mambunia continued to grumble to himself for a few minutes, and Masisi asked who was going to give him some tobacco.

It seemed that the girl was very ill with dysentery but was not yet dead. The Pygmies express various degrees of illness by saying that someone is hot, with fever, ill, dead, completely or absolutely dead, and, finally, dead for ever.

Unhappily, early the next morning loud wailing from Cephu's camp, a quarter of a mile away, told us that the little girl was now dead for ever. When someone is ill the women relatives will wail, but it is a formal act, perhaps copied from the Negroes for whom it is an obligation. But when someone really dies, for ever, there is among the Pygmies a burst of uncontrollable grief, not only from relatives, but from friends. Even men will weep if they have been close to the dead person. It is a very different sound, and a terrible one, and that is what we heard shortly after dawn.

The funeral took place the same day, directed by the Negroes. I helped with the digging of the grave, but Kenge, Kelemoke, Amabosu, and Masisi's eldest son Ageronga were the chief diggers. The Negroes lent the tools and stood there, giving instructions, and they became impatient and angry when we stopped and climbed out of the grave for a smoke. The young Pygmies laughed and joked, and

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763 atmosphere was so tense I wondered if there was at last going to be
761 a real accusation of witchcraft, though from what I had seen the Pygmies had no great belief in such things. But Moke's first words put me at ease. Choking back a little sob, he managed to say in a matter-of-fact way, "She died well."

There was a general nodding of heads. Manyalibo, who was a nephew of Balekimito's, said in his gruff way that everyone should be happy that she had lived so long, happy that she had died so well, and that all this wailing should stop at once. He added that the death was a "big thing," and that it was a "matter for the forest."
[765] There was a silence, and, looking around to make sure that there were no women about, Manyalibo announced, "I shall call out my molimo, and we will feast not for a week but for a month, or two months, or even three; we shall feast the molimo and make the forest happy."

763 Njobo, the great elephant hunter, had the final say. He stirred
[555] the fire idly with a stick, sending showers of sparks and ashes up
[829] into the warm air. "We have been in the village too long," he said.
186 "We should have gone back to the forest before; that is where we
[768] belong. Now we must go back, far away from the village and from the people of the village. It is a bad place."

He said that a few would stay behind to finish the work on my house, but that the rest of us should gather together all the food we could and be ready to move within a couple of days. The next day we would put Balekimito in the ground, and maybe the day after that we would leave.

At this everyone cheered up visibly and began criticizing the women and children who were still pouring in and out of Ekianga's
[152] house, beating themselves and crying. Masisi said crossly that they
[828] would never behave this way if they were in the forest, and as he talked he raised his voice until he worked himself into a real temper. He stalked out of the veranda and down to the far end of the little

village, brandishing one hand above his head, telling everyone to stop making such a dreadful noise, that it was not doing any good to anybody. "Crying is a matter for the immediate family," he said. "She was a mother to us all, but for all of us to cry is just too much noise." He clutched his head to illustrate the point, then grabbed a couple of children, one of them his own, and sent them flying. By now his temper was no longer artificial, and the women decided it was wiser to keep out of his way, and left.

As soon as the wailing stopped and the door to Ekianga's house was closed, with only the family inside, the cloud of depression lifted. Everyone started talking about the imminent return to the forest—about where they would go to hunt, where they would go for mushrooms and for fruit and nuts and honey, and where they should make their first camp. All agreed that it should be far away—but not so far that old Tungana could not come.

That night there was a little wailing from Ekianga's house, and a few women both in the main camp and in Cephu's camp were crying to themselves. Every now and then Masisi's sharp voice was raised, telling them all to go to sleep.

The funeral took place the following morning, again conducted by the Negroes. Balekimito was buried next to Cephu's daughter, and once again, when the grave had been filled in and the women had left, the Negroes tried to conduct a council to discover who had been responsible for the death. But the Pygmies were in no mood to play games. They simply walked off after the women, washed themselves perfunctorily in the Nepussi and returned to the camp to start preparations for going back to the forest.

After all, if Balekimito had died she had died well, and there was a lot to do—plantations to raid and food to steal. This was no time to fool around with Negro notions of witchcraft and sorcery; this was a time to get back to the forest as quickly as possible and to hold the biggest molimo festival the forest had ever seen, to make the forest happy again.

singing snatches of songs and shouting back and forth to one another about all the animals they were going to kill and eat.

Occasionally we heard an echo of our own voices coming back from the depths of the forest. Then we stopped, and one by one the young men shouted bold phrases to imaginary maidens, holding their noses and mouths, ready to stifle the shriek of laughter that would come when the same rude challenge was shouted back at them. They clapped one another on the back and held onto one another for support as they laughed, inventing all sorts of things they would do and say to any girl who answered them in such a way. The Pygmy is not in the least self-conscious about showing his emotions; he likes to laugh until tears come to his eyes and he is too weak to stand. He then sits down or lies on the ground and laughs still louder.

As we went on the forest became more spacious, and it seemed lighter, although the trees still met high overhead and shut out all direct sunlight. There was no need to worry about overhanging branches now, for here the forest was virgin, untouched by the sacrilegious hand of the village cultivator, and clear of heavy undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot, carpeted with leaves that sometimes concealed a projecting root. But the pygmies knew where every obstacle was, even though they could not see it, and they picked up their feet to avoid tripping.

On all sides we could see for twenty or thirty yards. The giant trunks of the old trees were surrounded by slender, branchless saplings, all so far apart that we could wander off the path freely at almost any point. Here and there the main path was crossed by a smaller path made by some animal, and Kenge frequently turned off and followed the animal trail, beckoning me to follow. A few minutes later he would stop and sit down on his bundle, and then when the rest appeared along the main path he would jump to his feet and make fun of them for "walking like the BaNgwana." The

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5

The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter

765 EVERY NIGHT the men gathered to sing the songs of the molimo,
533 and every morning the youths awakened the camp with their shouts and yells. This went on week after week, yet the daily life of the hunting group continued as though nothing particularly unusual was
• [152] happening. The men were more sleepy in the mornings, and sometimes tempers were short, but never for long. The necessities of hunting and gathering for a living did not allow it.

512 As soon as the camp was light and there was no further danger of the molimo's making an appearance, the women emerged from their huts and went down to the river to bathe and to collect water

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selfish magic. Moke threw the horns in a fire and no more was said. It so happened that the family in question continued to have good luck for some time.

Hunting, for a Pygmy group, is a co-operative affair—net-hunting particularly. The use of private magic is frowned on, though there is no law against it. The sacred hunting fire is all that they consider right and necessary, and this is found throughout the forest. It is thought to secure the blessing of the forest which provides the game, and to bring good luck to the entire group. Even those groups that hunt mainly with bow and arrow, hunt not as individuals, but for the group as a whole. For the net hunters it is impossible to hunt alone. Men, women and children all have to co-operate if the hunt is to be successful.

The "Fire of the Hunt" simply involves the lighting of a fire at the base of a tree a short distance from the camp. In other Pygmy groups I have seen a variation in which the fire is lighted within the camp, special sticks around it pointing in the direction the hunt is going to take. In this case the fire is surrounded by a long and heavy vine laid in a circle on the ground, and when the game is brought home it is placed within this circle before being divided. But this particular group, and others in the area, were less formal.

I remember one morning in particular when we went to kindle the Fire of the Hunt outside the camp, because it was the day that old Cephu committed one of the greatest sins possible in the forest.

I doubt if any of us had managed to snatch more than two hours' sleep, and we were all quiet while preparing for the hunt. In a Pygmy camp this is the surest danger signal of all, for usually everyone is talking and laughing and shouting rude remarks from one end of the camp to the other. It was not only that we were tired, but of late Cephu had refused to contribute to the molimo basket, and that morning he had been heard to call out, in his loudest voice, that he was fed up with the molimo of "that camp over there." Even though he always

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765 Even though he always
578 made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought
• 152 of as the same camp, and whether or not we appreciated his presence
621 we thought of his camp and ours as being the same. Even his unwillingness to take part in the molimo was accepted, to maintain some semblance of unity; but this sudden statement made it impossible to ignore Cephu's feeling of rivalry any longer. Rather than cause an open breach, everyone in the main camp kept his thoughts to himself and was silent.

224 About an hour after dawn, four or five youths with their nets and
372 spears went off to light the hunting fire. I went with them, and only when we had crossed the Lelo and were on the other side did they speak. Then it was about trivialities, and soon they were chatting and laughing as though nothing were wrong. Shortly afterward we were joined by half a dozen of the younger married men, the most active hunters, and we lit the fire at the top of the hill. Leaves and twigs were piled around the base of a young tree, and an ember brought from the camp set them ablaze. More leaves were thrown on so that dense clouds of smoke went billowing up to the invisible sky, until finally the flames burst through with a great roar of victory.
[182] There was no great ritual or ceremonial, but somehow this act put the hunters in harmony with the forest and secured its blessing and assistance for the day's hunt. The Pygmies regard fire as the most precious gift of the forest, and by offering it back to the forest they are acknowledging their debt and their dependence.

224 As we sat around waiting for the others, one or two couples passed
[222] by. They were going ahead so they would have extra time for gathering mushrooms on the way. They paused to chat and then walked
224 on, lightly, swiftly, and gaily. Before long the main body of hunters
372 arrived and asked where Cephu was. We had not seen him. It
578 seemed that he had left the camp shortly after us but instead of
156 passing by the hunting fire had followed a different path. Someone suggested that he was building a fire of his own. This brought cries

[i.e., Cephu. - Analyst]

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224 This dance[1] was still in progress when the main body of the hunters
578 returned. They strode into camp with glowering faces and threw
• 152 their nets on the ground outside their huts. Then they sat down,
156 with their chins in their hands, staring into space and saying nothing. The women followed, mostly with empty baskets, but they were by no means silent. They swore at each other, they swore at their husbands, and most of all they swore at Cephu. Moke looked across at me and smiled. He was skinning the civet.

I tried to find out what had happened, but nobody would say. Kenge, who had been sleeping, came out of our hut and joined the shouting. He was the only male who was not sitting down, and although he was young he had a powerful voice, and a colorful use of language. I heard him saying, "Cephu is an impotent old fool. No, he isn't, he is an impotent old animal—we have treated him like a man for long enough, now we should treat him like an animal. *Animal!*" He shouted the final epithet across at Cephu's camp, although Cephu had not yet returned.

The result of Kenge's tirade was that everyone calmed down and began criticizing Cephu a little less heatedly, but on every possible score: The way he always built his camp separately, the way he had even referred to it as a separate camp, the way he mistreated his relatives, his general deceitfulness, the dirtiness of his camp, and even his own personal habits.

The rest of the hunters came in shortly afterward, with Cephu leading. He strode across the camp and into his own little clearing
[965] without a word. Ekianga and Manyalibo, who brought up the rear, sat down at the kumamolimo and announced to the world at large that Cephu had disgraced them all and that they were going to tear down the kumamolimo and abandon the camp and end the molimo. Manyalibo shouted that he wanted everyone to come to the kumamolimo at once, even Cephu. This was a great matter and had to be settled immediately. Kenge, not slow to seize the opportunity

1. [i.e., the imitation of the leopard--Analyst]

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for reviving his earlier show of wit, relayed Manyalibo's message by standing in midcamp and shouting over in Cephu's direction, *"Nyama'e, nyama'e! Pika'i to, nyama UE!"* (Animal there! Animal there! Come at once, *you*, you animal!") The youngsters all laughed loudly, but the older men paid no attention. This sent Kenge into a sulk and he started calling us all animals, adding that we were a lot of savages, just like the village people. But now not even the youngsters were listening, for Cephu had appeared.

Trying not to walk too quickly, yet afraid to dawdle too deliberately, he made an awkward entrance. For as good an actor as Cephu it was surprising. By the time he got to the kumamolimo everyone was doing something to occupy himself—staring into the fire or up at the tree tops, roasting plantains, smoking, or whittling away at arrow shafts. Only Ekianga and Manyalibo looked impatient, but they said nothing. Cephu walked into the group, and still nobody spoke. He went up to where a youth was sitting in a chair. Usually he would have been offered a seat without his having to ask, and now he did not dare ask, and the youth continued to sit there in as nonchalant a manner as he could muster. Cephu went to another chair where Amabosu was sitting. He shook it violently when Amabosu ignored him, at which he was told, "Animals lie on the ground."

This was too much for Cephu, and he went into a long diatribe about how he was one of the oldest hunters in the group, and one of the best hunters, and that he thought it was very wrong for everyone to treat him like an animal. Only villagers were like animals. Masisi spoke up in his favor and ordered Amabosu to give up his chair. Amabosu did so with a gesture of contempt and moved over to the far side of the group. Moke was the only one to stay completely apart. He sat outside his hut. He had finished skinning the civet and was twisting strands of vine together to make a frame for the hat. He looked peaceful and contented.

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224 765 578 156 Manyalibo stood up and began a rather pompous statement of how everyone wanted this camp to be a good camp, and how everyone wanted the molimo to be a good molimo, with lots of singing, lots of eating, and lots of smoking. But Cephu never took part in the molimo, he pointed out. And Cephu's little group never contributed to the molimo basket. Manyalibo went on, listing the various ways in which Cephu had defaulted and made the camp into a bad camp instead of a good camp, and the molimo a bad molimo. And now, he added, Cephu had made the hunt a bad hunt. He recalled how on the first day, even before the camp was built, we had been presented with an antelope by the forest, but how ever since Cephu had joined us things had gone from bad to worse.

224 765 578 156 593 Cephu tried to interject that the molimo was really none of his business. At this Masisi, who had befriended him over the chair incident, and who had relatives in his camp, rounded on him sharply. He reminded Cephu that he had been glad enough to accept help and food and song when his daughter had died; now that his "mother" had died, why did he reject her? Cephu replied that Balekimito was not his mother. This was what everyone was waiting for. Not only did he name the dead woman, an unheard-of offense, [602] [621] but he denied that she was his mother. Even though there was only the most distant relationship, and that by marriage, it was equivalent to asserting that he did not belong to the same group as Ekianga and Manyalibo and the rest.

578 156 152 224 Ekianga leaped to his feet and brandished his hairy fist across the fire. He said that he hoped Cephu would fall on his spear and kill himself like the animal he was. Who but an animal would steal meat from others? There were cries of rage from everyone, and Cephu burst into tears. Apparently, during the last cast of the nets Cephu, who had not trapped a single animal the whole day long, had slipped away from the others and set up his net in front of them. In this way

participate, but only after the entire camp had been involved in discussing the case. Less serious offenses were settled in the simplest way, by the litigants themselves either arguing out the case, or engaging in a mild fight.

I came across only one instance of the first type of crime. We had all eaten in the evening and were sitting around our fires. It was with Kenge and a group of the bachelors, talking about something quite trivial, when all of a sudden there was a tremendous wailing and crying from Cephu's camp. A few seconds later there was shouting from the path connecting the two camps and young Kelemoke came rushing through our camp, hotly pursued by other youths who were armed with spears and knives. Everyone ran into the huts and closed the little doorways. The bachelors, however, instead of going in with their families, ran to the nearest trees and climbed up into the lower branches. I followed Kenge up one of the smaller trees and sat among the ants, whose persistent biting I hardly noticed. What was going on below took all my attention.

Kelemoke tried to take refuge in a hut, but he was turned away with angry remarks, and a burning log was thrown after him. Masisi yelled at him to run to the forest. His pursuers were nearly on top of him when they all disappeared at the far end of the camp.

At this point three girls came running out of Cephu's camp, right into the middle of our clearing. They also carried knives—the little paring knives they used for cutting vines and for peeling and shredding roots. They were not only shouting curses against Kelemoke and his immediate family, but they were weeping, with tears streaming down their faces. When they did not find Kelemoke, one of them threw her knife into the ground and started beating herself with her fists, shouting over and over again, "He has killed me, he has killed me!" After a pause for breath she added, "I shall never be able to live again!" Kenge made a caustic comment on the logic of the statement, from the safety of his branch, and immediately the girls turned

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684 their attention to our tree and began to threaten us. They called us all
835 manner of names, and then they fell on the ground and rolled over
• [152] and over, beating themselves, tearing their hair, and wailing loudly.

Just then there came more shouts from two directions. One set was from the youths who had evidently found Kelemoke hiding just outside the camp. At this the girls leaped up and, brandishing their knives, set off to join the pursuit. The other shouts, for the first time from adult men and women, came from the camp of Cephu. I could not make out what they were about, but I could see the glow of flames.

I asked Kenge what had happened. He looked very grave now and said that it was the greatest shame that could befall a Pygmy—Kelemoke had committed incest. In some African tribes it is actually preferred that cousins should marry each other, but among the Ba-Mbuti this was considered almost as incestuous as sleeping with a brother or sister. I asked Kenge if they would kill Kelemoke if they found him, but Kenge said they would not find him.

684 "He has been driven to the forest," he said, "and he will have to
835 live there alone. Nobody will accept him into their group after what
627 he has done. And he will die, because one cannot live alone in the
[153] forest. The forest will kill him. And if it does not kill him he will die of leprosy." Then, in typical Pygmy fashion, he burst into smothered laughter, clapped his hands and said, "He has been doing it for months; he must have been very stupid to let himself be caught. No wonder they chased him into the forest." To Kenge, evidently, the greater crime was Kelemoke's stupidity in being found out.

All the doors to the huts still remained tight shut. Njobo and Moke had both been called on by the youths to show themselves and settle the matter, but they had both refused to leave their huts, leaving Kelemoke to his fate. Now there was an even greater uproar over in Cephu's camp, and Kenge and I decided to climb down from the tree and see what was going on.

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instead of accepting it she abruptly turned it upside down and knocked the remaining tobacco out into the dirt. This was not only wasteful, but a deliberate insult. Masalito did not want to take offense, so he gave Tamasa the chance to re-establish good relations. He asked her to give him one of the new pipestems to take back to his hut for himself and his wife to enjoy. To refuse her husband's brother would be an open act of aggression quite uncalled for, and if she made the gift she would automatically cancel the previous insult. Masalito thought that he had not only maneuvered the political situation to his advantage but also won for himself and his wife a new pipestem. Unfortunately he had chosen a bad day.

Tamasa felt that Masalito was trying to get the better of her, and to get her to give away her husband's property while he was asleep, without asking him. She said, "Certainly I will give you a pipestem." Then she went behind the hut, where all the rubbish was thrown, and came back with a withered and smelly stump of a pipe. It had been pared away so often between smokes, to keep the mouthpiece fresh, that it was now only two feet long instead of six or seven. And instead of being fresh and green and juicy it was stale and brown and dry, reeking of old tobacco and spittle. This she presented to Masalito, who was so upset that he cried with rage, and asked why she and Aberi always treated him so badly. Tamasa promptly retorted that it was not bad treatment to feed him and give him tobacco every time he came over from his camp. Didn't his wife look after him, that he had to come and scrounge from his brother?

This was too much for Masalito, who had wanted only to be on good terms with everyone. He called Tamasa a name that one should never use to one's brother's wife, and Tamasa started crying. This awakened Aberi, who came out of his hut sleepily, looking uglier than ever. Without trying to explain, Masalito, still sobbing tearlessly with rage, hit his brother over the head with the withered pipestem Tamasa had given him. Brandishing the offending article above

his head he stalked back to the main camp shouting at the top of his voice what miserable wretches his brother and his sister-in-law were. The dirty old pipe was damning evidence, and all sympathy was with Masalito. Njobo's wife took her husband's pipestem and gave it to Masalito, who quickly regained his good humor. But by now Aberi was aroused, and came storming into the camp, saying that his brother had insulted Tamasa. He declared that it was a matter for serious action; Masalito should be thrashed.

Everybody thought this was a great joke, and burst into laughter Only children and youths get thrashed, and Masalito was a father. Aberi did not like being laughed at and he went over to where Masalito was sitting down on a log, smoking his new pipe. He demanded an apology. Masalito, now completely composed, simply picked up the old pipestem and threw it at his brother's feet, saying, "There! That is for her!" By now a crowd had gathered around, and the hotter Aberi became the more relaxed Masalito seemed to be.

Aberi shook his fists and said that if nobody else was going to thrash Masalito he was. This brought more laughs as Aberi was positively puny beside Masalito, who himself was little more than four feet tall. Masalito invited his brother to come and try. Aberi then pretended that he was holding a spear, and in a high-pitched voice, squeaking with anger, he cried out, "I am going to get my spear and I am going to kill you completely!" Whereupon he imitated a spear thrust in Masalito's direction. There was a gasp of horror, as this is something one does not say to one's brother even in jest. But Masalito replied calmly, "Go and get your spear, then, and come back and kill me. I'll still be here. You don't have the courage to kill your brother." He said a lot of other things, goading Aberi on to an even higher pitch of fury. Aberi tried to make himself more impressive by a graphic dance, which was meant to show exactly how he was going to leap in the air and twist around and drive the spear home. But he

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was not a good dancer, and when he tried to illustrate the leap he fell flat on his face.

That was the end of the matter for Aberi. For weeks he was ridiculed, everyone asking him if he had lost his spear, or telling him to be careful not to trip and fall. But it was not quite the end of the matter for Masalito. He felt more angry than ever at his brother, because Aberi had made himself, and so the whole family, an object of ridicule. Masalito felt this an added insult to himself. Even Kelemoke was furious. So relations between the two brothers got worse and worse, and every time there was a silence in the camp Masalito would complain in a loud voice about his brother and his brother's wife.

At first this was tolerated, but finally it threatened to split the camp in two. Masalito began naming all his friends and relatives to support him in ignoring Aberi; he refused to say a word to his brother. Of course his brother could claim support from the same relatives and friends, and tension was spreading throughout both camps. That was when the molimo stepped in and showed public disapproval of Masalito. The original source of the dispute, and Aberi's undoubted wrongdoing, were forgotten. Masalito was guilty of the much more serious crime of splitting the hunting band into opposing factions. He himself was then ridiculed and shamed into silence. After that it was only one or two days before the two brothers became good friends and hunting companions once again.

Disputes were generally settled with little reference to the alleged rights and wrongs of the case, but chiefly with the intention of restoring peace to the community. One night Kenge slipped out of our hut on an amorous expedition to the hut of Manyalibo, who had an attractive daughter, one of Kenge's many admirers. Shortly afterward there was a howl of rage and Kenge came flying back across the

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clearing with a furious Manyalibo hurling sticks and stones after him. Manyalibo then took up a position in the middle of the clearing and woke the whole camp up, calling out in a loud voice and denouncing Kenge as an incestuous good-for-nothing. Actually Kenge was only very distantly related to the girl, and the flirtation was not at all out of order, though marriage might have been. Several people tried to point this out to Manyalibo, but he became increasingly vociferous. He said that it wasn't so much that Kenge had tried to sleep with his daughter, but that he had been brazen enough to crawl right over her sleeping father to get at her, waking him up in the process. This was a considered insult, for any decent youth would have made a prior arrangement to meet his girl elsewhere. He called on Kenge to justify himself. But Kenge was too busy laughing and only managed to call out "You are making too much noise!" This seemed a poor defense, but in fact it was not. Manyalibo set up another hue and cry about Kenge's general immorality and disrespect for his elders, and strode up and down the camp rattling on the roofs of huts to call everyone to his defense.

Moke took the place in the center of the camp where Manyalibo had stood, and where everyone stands who wants to address the whole camp formally. He gave a low whistle, like the whistle given on the hunt to call for silence. When everyone was quiet he told Manyalibo that the noise was giving him a headache, and he wanted to sleep. Manyalibo retorted that this matter was more serious than Moke's sleep. Moke replied in a very deliberate, quiet voice, "You are making too much noise—you are killing the forest, you are killing the hunt. It is for us older men to sleep at night and not to worry about the youngsters. They know what to do and what not to do." Manyalibo growled with dissatisfaction, but he went back to his hut, taunted by well-directed remarks from Kenge and his friends.

Whether Kenge had done something wrong or not was relatively immaterial. Manyalibo had done the greater wrong by waking the

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himself for comfort. He stayed in the forest for nearly twenty-four hours, and when he came back the next night he went straight to his hut, unseen, and lay down to sleep. His hut was between mine and Sau's, and I heard him come in, and I heard him crying softly because even his brother wouldn't speak to him.

The next day Pepei was his old self, and everyone was glad to see him laughing; they were happy to be able to listen to his jokes, and they all gave him food so that he wouldn't have to steal again.

But sometimes a dispute cannot be settled in any of these ways. It blows up too quickly to be ended by ridicule; the participants are too old to be thrashed; yet it is not serious enough to merit ostracism. Such disputes are usually trivial in origin, and often arise from the confined and close conditions of living. Personal relations become very involved in a hunting group, particularly when both members of a sister-exchange marriage are living in the same group.

Under this system, when a boy chooses a wife he becomes obliged to find a "sister"—actually any girl relative—to offer in exchange to his bride's family for one of their bachelor sons. This can be quite a chore, as it may be difficult to find a "sister" who is willing to marry the youth his in-laws have in mind as a groom, and whom the groom himself will also like.

Amabosu had married Ekianga's sister, and Ekianga had married, as his third wife, Amabosu's sister, the beautiful Kamaikan. He had just had a child by her, while Amabosu was still childless. Since Kamaikan was nursing a child, Ekianga was under an obligation not to sleep with her, and his two other wives were happy that at last they could expect him to pay them some attention. But to everyone's dismay he continued to sleep with Kamaikan. And one day Amabosu started making loud remarks across the camp about his sister's health.

This was not at Apa Lelo, but at a later camp, Apa Kadiketu. Amabosu's hut was to my right, and it faced directly across toward

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765 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous
535 speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to
481 come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one,
533 went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tenta-
372 tive, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge.
• 152 Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

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an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was completely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Kondabate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end. They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night. It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great headdress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than

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ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent molimo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

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men held out for the village, the older for the forest. All the older men except Tungana, that is. That wily old grandfather thought the village was better as they might be able to make money out of tourists who would pay to see them dance. Tourists had been increasing in number ever since the Animal Station had been established at Epulu, and the Pygmies found tourists even easier to trick than villagers.

It was eventually decided that the elima, which had already begun in Kondabate's hut, should go to the village and take over Ekianga's house, as it was the biggest and he was related to one of the girls anyway. The villagers would give food to the elima. Asofalinda would be in charge. Everyone else would stay a while longer in the forest. Then they would bring the molimo to the village one night and have a final dance there, because the villagers believed that a period of mourning, which is how they regarded the molimo, should end with a ritual feast, and so they would give the Pygmies more food. That would put all the men in a good humor to attend to their part of the elima festivities.

I was a little surprised that they should even think of bringing the molimo to the village. Moke told me not to worry, that no villagers would know anything of what went on in the forest, and if any villagers came to watch they would only see the Pygmies imitating what the villagers do themselves. But he shook his head and added, "Even so, it *is* bad. It is a thing of the forest, and it should end there. Perhaps we shall have to end it twice."

The night before we were due to move back to the village everyone was very quiet. The women prepared the food for the evening meal without talking to one another. Tungana sat outside his hut, hunched forward, his gray old head resting on one hand because he had an abscess on the side of his neck. Moke wandered restlessly from one end of the camp to the other, and Masisi snapped at everyone who gave him an excuse. This was some three months after

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the molimo had begun, and we were in a camp much closer to the village than we had been at Apa Lelo . . . Only about two hours' walk away. Cephu, as usual, had his camp at a distance, but rather farther removed than usual, and we saw less of him than ever. The next morning we found that he had abandoned his camp the night before and gone to join a hunting group farther to the west; he wanted no part of returning to the village.

Even the children were depressed and sat around in silent little groups fitfully playing with spinning tops made from slices of forest nuts. Every now and again one of them got in the way of an adult and was severely smacked. His cries brought only a sterner cuffing, and by nightfall the camp was filled with wailing children and bad-tempered adults. Only the youths seemed cheerful. For them the village meant tobacco, palm wine, the wild erotic dancing the Pygmies love to perform for the villagers, and a relaxation from the tensions of the forest. They would no longer be hunting, so they would be free from the restrictions that way of life imposed. They would no longer be in the forest, so they would be free from its ever-present authority. If the villagers thought the BaMbuti then came under their authority, that was their mistake.

While the youths dreamed of the fun they were going to have, particularly with the girls in the elima house, all the adults were silent. Kenge, who although he was older still liked to associate with the youths, stood boastfully in the middle of a group of admirers and talked of all the village girls he was going to sleep with. And not only one a night, but two, three, perhaps even thirty. "And I am going to drink palm wine until there is no more to drink. I am going to steal all the palm wine there is in the village and drink it all myself, to make me strong. But I won't get drunk, so when they come to me and say, 'Kenge, why have you drunken all our palm wine?' I shall just say, 'You committer of incest' "—Kenge had a very descriptive word for this—" 'if I had drunk all your palm wine

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would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and buy themselves beer."

"And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been. The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it with love. When some of the youngsters began to dance Moke shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-

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ing us as gently as the breeze. When he had finished he stood by the fire and sang to the forest by himself, with the molimo answering from a great distance, getting fainter and fainter. Finally they were both singing so quietly that I could hardly distinguish their music from the music of the crickets and the frogs and the birds of the night. Somewhere a hyrax gave its throaty, rasping call of despair, and an owl hooted. Moke sat down, and nobody spoke, and nobody sang. Something wonderful had come into our lives and filled them with the magic of love and trust, and though we still possessed that love and trust, we regretted the going of the power that had brought it.

At dawn we were awakened as usual by the sound of the two trumpets. But there was a quality about their tone that was harsh and brash. We all knew that the real molimo had gone, but we had to go through with the final ritual for the benefit of the villagers. The bellowings did not last long, and soon the trumpets disappeared in the direction of the village with a bunch of noisy youths in attendance. Later, when the main body of the camp was packed up and ready to leave, one of the youths came running back and told us with great excitement what fun they had had frightening the villagers with the molimo, but that now it was safely hidden in the forest, on the outskirts of the village.

We got a warm reception as we emerged from the plantations among the neat rows of mud houses. The villagers eyed the baskets on the women's backs and tried to estimate how much meat they were bringing. They called out offers of free meals in an attempt to bribe their way into the favor of people whom they theoretically regarded as slaves. As we filed from the leafy plantation, leaving the forest behind us, we left a kind and friendly world and entered a different one. Here, if the world was open to the sky it was also open to greed and suspicion and treachery. Village women attached themselves to "their" Pygmies and tried to pry into the baskets

others in almost total darkness. It must have been quite an old camp, for all the leaves on the huts were dry and brown.

We crept right up to the nearest hut without being seen, and then Kidaya ran lightly across the clearing and gave the sleeping youth of her choice a sound thwack with her whip. He leaped up, not so much in fear or anger as in surprise and in shame that he should have been caught. He grabbed for his bow and picked up a small stone which he fired back at Kidaya as he ran away. Kidaya laughed with delight. This was a sure sign that her overtures had been accepted.

The whole of the camp was awake before the rest of the girls had had time to whip more than a few boys, and it soon became alive with lashing whips and flying sticks and stones. The women and children crept into the backs of their huts for shelter, while the men ran from rubbish dump to rubbish dump, gathering the banana skins they used as ammunition. When they could not find any, they used whatever came to hand. A slice of banana skin fired from a taut bow at close quarters can be quite painful, and the girls found that the boys were putting up a good fight. So they picked up a few vine baskets that had been left lying around, and using these as shields they advanced on their quarry.

The fight got more and more fierce, and at one time the boys managed to drive the girls right back into the huts. Then they stood at the entrances and fired their pellets of banana skin inside, giving rise to squeals of anguish. But Kidaya was too tough to be done down so easily. She emerged from her shelter without even a basket for protection, and made a dash for the nearest fire. As she bent down to pick up a burning log, her particular boy friend fired a pellet that struck her on her buttocks with a smack. Kidaya spun around and hurled the log with all her might; then she rubbed her backside affectionately and smiled. The other girls also began throwing logs, and soon there was hardly a fire left in the camp, and burning logs were scattered everywhere.

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881 533 *were* women. They sang right through the evening and now and then stood up and danced in a bashful circle around one of the fires. 881 They sang songs whose words had no particular significance, but 885 which in themselves were of the greatest significance, being songs 533 sung only by adult women. That was why so many of the mothers and grandmothers had assembled, to welcome their daughters into their midst again, no longer as children, but as friends and partners in adult life. Some of the women looked sad, for they knew that [591] this meant that the girls would soon get married, and then they would almost certainly leave to join their husbands in other camps.

881 885 157 Akidinimba was very different from her usual boisterous self. She was still self-assured, and she bounced her breasts up and down as flagrantly as ever, but perhaps she was subdued by the thought that she was no longer the leader of a group of young girls, but only a young and inexperienced member of womanhood, with all the responsibilities this entailed.

881 533 415 Kidaya too was thoughtful. While the others sang Kidaya sat with her back to them, fondling a large clay cooking pot. She tapped on it with her fingers, keeping time to the music. Then she drew it close and held the mouth of the pot against her stomach, bending her head down to listen to the effect. It evidently pleased her, because she continued the experiment by taking hold of her breasts and forcing them into the mouth of the pot, squirming around until she was comfortable. Then she moved her body rhythmically, producing a variety of curious sounds, not only in the tone of the drumming of her hands, but by making sucking noises as the air was forced in and out. When she tired of that she put the pot between her knees, and sang quietly into the mouth of it, getting a deep reverberating effect. This sounded so much like the molimo that the men started, and one of the women turned and said something sharply to Kidaya. 881 Kidaya herself was a little startled and put the pot away from her. 152 302 She relapsed into a thoughtful mood, slowly and deliberately rubbing

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herself with her hands, wiping off all the beautiful decorations so laboriously painted on her body by her friends. When the singing ended and the girls retired for the night, Akidinimba was still as decorative as when she first appeared, but Kidaya was just a mass of streaked and dirty gray. And there were tears in her eyes.

During the last week the elima battles reached their highest pitch, both sides making the most of the opportunity while it lasted. The elima was, on the surface, a pretty happy-go-lucky affair, and what went on inside the hut was best left to the imagination. But in fact it all had a very definite purpose, and was closely supervised by the watchful eyes of Asofalinda and Mambunia. For the Pygmies, the elima is not just a puberty rite for girls; it is a celebration of adulthood, and just as much for boys as for girls. For Akidinimba and Kidaya certain physical changes had taken place which marked them as women, but for boys there are no such self-evident changes. They have to prove their manhood. Village boys do this by entering the initiation schools, but even though Pygmies enter the same schools, it is for a different purpose, quite unconnected with adulthood as they see it. For them the elima serves the purpose, or at least a part of it.

In the elima, the boy has to show considerable courage to fight his way into the house, after he has been invited. In the last week the women maintain constant guard outside, and they are well supplied with all sorts of ammunition. If they want to keep any particular boy away from their daughters they are perfectly capable of doing it. And when a boy finally succeeds in breaking his way through he still has to face a possible beating from the girls inside. If he has not been invited by having been beaten beforehand, he will certainly have to go through it now.

As well as this, in order to prove himself a man, the boy has to kill "a real animal." That is to say, not a small one, such as a child might kill, but one of the larger antelopes, or even a buffalo, so prov-

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THE MARRIAGE OF KENGE

Kenge's decision came almost as much as a surprise to her as it did to the rest of us, as he was as notorious as Akidinimba for being a confirmed flirt. In fact, most people thought he would marry Biyo, Tungana's daughter. But Kenge said no, Tungana was almost like a relative to him, and it would be incest to marry his daughter. People pointed out that this had not stopped him from sleeping with Biyo, but Kenge maintained that the two situations were totally different. Anyway, he had set his heart on Maliamo, and she had set her heart on him.

The situation dragged on for so long that Kenge began to see rather more of Maliamo than was allowed by customary flirtation, and people began to whisper. This drove him to take more desperate measures with his sister.

One morning the village camp was awakened to the sound of terrified screaming from the house directly opposite mine, where Yambabo was sleeping. I looked out of my window and saw Kenge dragging his sister out of the hut by one arm, pulling her over the ground and shouting to the camp that she was no good and should be killed. He pointed to her breasts and said that she had enough milk to feed a dozen children, why did she refuse to marry? Yambabo was as strong as a buffalo, he continued, so why did she refuse to work? He then gave what he considered could be the only reason, which was extremely personal and uncomplimentary. Yambabo tried to get to her feet to hit him, but every time she began struggling he simply thumped her on the back with his fist, still keeping a tight hold of her with his other hand.

People came sleepily out of their huts to watch, all rather agreeing that Yambabo really should have married long ago and deserved a brotherly beating. Encouraged by this, Kenge began kicking her, and she responded by biting him in the leg. Moke tried to intervene, but it was no good. Kenge was ready for murder, and by the time he had finished with Yambabo she was a sorry sight, scratched and

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593 152 [581] bleeding, with one eye swollen. And still she refused to marry Taphu.

From that morning on, we all accepted the fact that Kenge was going to continue beating his sister until she gave in, and it was just a question of how long she could hold out. One day, when her brother had been particularly bad-tempered with her she ran away to their mother's home, many miles to the east. I asked Kenge if he was going to follow her, but he shook his head. He said, "Our mother will beat her much more severely than I. She knows that [836] Yambabo loves Taphu but is too lazy to get married. All she wants to do is to sleep with him. She is as bad as Akidinimba." And so he stayed, sitting by the fire all day in a sulk, leaving me to cook my own food and his.

593 521 That evening the old men discussed the case by the central fire, with the women throwing in remarks from the huts all around. They were unanimous in believing that Kenge had done the only thing he could have done. Perhaps he should have beaten her harder, 583 Tungana said, for some girls like being beaten. And after all, it was 584 not as though he had chosen her husband as the villagers do, sometimes forcing a young girl to marry an old and ugly man merely because he can pay more bride-wealth than a younger man. Everyone knew that Taphu loved Yambabo as much as she loved him. He had asked her to marry him half a dozen times at least and was constantly giving little presents of meat and honey to her mother.

593 584 The next morning, shortly after dawn, I heard loud weeping and saw a bedraggled Yambabo being marched into the camp by her irate mother, Badorinji. Kenge was wandering about searching for firewood, but he hardly even looked up. He just muttered, "Now you will see, I did not beat her for myself alone."

Badorinji led her daughter by the wrist into the middle of the little village. She called out in her loud, musical voice that her son had always been a good son, a father to his sisters ever since their

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C 881 P 881 177 the matter by sending him to a mission school the far side of Mambasa.

The boys were not all cut on the same day, but over a period of two weeks. Akobo, the youngest son of Masisi, was the first to be cut, and with him went Masoudi, nephew of Ekianga. They were, at ten or eleven years of age, as brave as any adult, but they were tough children. It was different with little Sansiwake, one of Cephu's nephews. Sansiwake was one of the most beautiful children imaginable, and as beautiful and gentle in character as he was in appearance. He was soft-spoken, and had a voice as musical as his name. His eyes were the dark melting eyes of the *boloko* antelope, as sensitive and as trusting. On this occasion they were as frightened as those of a young animal caught in a hunting net, struggling for its life. His body was as graceful and as delicate as that of a fawn, and his thoughts were only thoughts of kindness, of concern and love for his mother, Tamasa, whose face was eaten away by yaws, and for his father, Aberi, who was hideously ugly and who constantly brought ridicule on himself and his family.

C 881 P 881 177 Sansiwake was the only boy to cry when being taken away from his home. He cried not only for himself, but because his mother was crying bitterly at being parted from her son who was as much a man to her as her husband. Sansiwake was brought to the village, and his head was shaved as the first of a series of ritual acts symbolizing the casting off of an old life. Then Sabani appeared, dressed and painted in a terrifying manner, to smell out his next victim. His face was covered with a mask, his body was daubed with white clay, and his arms and legs were bound with great bundles of raffia so that as he danced he looked half animal and half bird. With him were a number of nkumbi drummers, beating a wild and ear-shattering tattoo, driving all women and uninitiated children into their houses, where they locked and barred the doors. Only little Sansiwake was left outside.

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Congo-Kinshasa FO1

VILLAGE INITIATION AND MAGIC

After Sabani had danced around him, with the drums getting louder and louder, he was picked up and carried by a villager to the stream where the cutting was to take place. Some boys were cut in the initiation camp, others in the center of the village, and some in the stream; it depended largely on the whim of the moment. In the camp there was a scaffold on which the other boys sat while the doctor cut, but down in the stream, a short distance into the forest, Sansiwake had to stand on the rocks, the cold water splashing over his feet. He was held by the arms and legs so that he would not be able to struggle, and his considerate uncle, Masalito, clapped a hand over his mouth so that his screams would not bring him disgrace in the eyes of the villagers. But Sansiwake could not stand the pain; perhaps Sabani was drunk and cut badly. Sansiwake bit Masalito and then screamed his head off, struggling until he almost broke loose. Two days later, when he was just beginning to recover, it was decided that he would have to be cut again, as Sabani had not done as he should. Shortly afterward the weakened and thoroughly dejected boy went down with pneumonia, and would have died if the Pygmies had not broken all the rules of the initiation camp and kept him warm and well fed.

He was the only one to suffer any ill effects, and his behavior would have brought him lasting disgrace had he been a villager. The Pygmies, however, showed only consideration and sympathy for Sansiwake, and criticized the villagers openly for their unnecessary carelessness and brutality. The villagers retorted that Sansiwake's illness was only the penalty for his not having behaved himself properly.

From the moment the boys enter the camp they are meant to stand on their own feet without any help from their relatives, but the older brothers and fathers of the Pygmy boys were constantly comforting and encouraging them, at the risk of being ridiculed themselves. Masalito, in particular, was not afraid of being sneered at by the villagers. One boy, Kaoya, who was cut in the camp, was beaten as he

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influences of the villagers, particularly witchcraft. The theory was that they would be independent because they would no longer have to rely on the villagers for plantains, rice, peanuts, or other village foods. In point of fact the only thing for which the Pygmies might really be considered to depend on their neighbors was metal for their knife and spear blades. And this was the one thing the model plan for liberation did not teach them to produce or work for themselves.

It may have been coincidence, or it may have been the result of all this talk of Pygmy villages and of the way that elsewhere the forest was being cut down by modern machinery to build new roads, to open up new mines, or to cultivate more coffee, but within a few days what had been a happy-go-lucky camp became silent and depressed. The unhappy Pygmies argued that the more the forest was cut down for roads and mines and foreign plantations, the more would have to be cut down to make more plantations to feed all the laborers. It was not a happy outlook for them. Then, as always happened when they were upset, they began to sing one evening. They sang and sang, and even those who had been sleeping came out to join in.

During a pause between songs, while everyone was silent, we heard quite distinctly the long-drawn-out whistling cry that the Pygmies say comes from the chameleon. There was a shout of delight, and the singing immediately started again, but this time to a quite different tempo. The rhythm was given out by the sharp clapping of two short sticks which Amabosu had quickly cut from a nearby tree. They rang clear and true. The cry of the chameleon and the use of the *ngbengbe* sticks meant only one thing—there was honey nearby. Within a few days there was not a Pygmy left in the village.

Of all the many foods in the forest, honey attracts the Pygmies the most strongly. At all times of the year game is to be caught, different kinds of mushrooms and fruits and nuts and berries are to be

me and finally brought us down to a swampy region, dark and dank. 114
A stream flowed through the middle, fed by innumerable tiny rivulets from the hills all around. We picked our way across, balancing on fallen tree trunks and jumping from log to log. As we began to climb a steep hill on the far side I heard the telltale sound of bark cloth being pounded into shape, the cheerful shouting of women as they called to each other while they finished the building of their huts, and an occasional outburst of song, sung for no other reason than that this was the honey season, the season to be happy, the season to rejoice. Kenge gave a loud whoop of pleasure and darted [152] among the trees like a young antelope, leaping and bounding out of sight. When I reached the clearing he was already sitting down, his face buried in a sticky mongongo leaf dripping with rich brown honey. He looked up and laughed.

The camp was called Apa Toangbe, the *toangbe* being a special 361
kind of honey tree. It was built halfway up a fairly high hill, on a [192]
patch of ground that was not quite level. Masisi's house was at the highest point of the tiny clearing, with Asofalinda to one side and Maipe's mother to the other. Masamba had built a house that virtually joined onto that of Masisi. Mine was halfway up the slope on the other side, facing across to Maipe. It was all ready when we arrived, the only one completely finished. Masisi proudly led me to it and inspected it with me. He had built the bed himself, carefully [352]
refraining from turning the ends of the branches up sharply as Pygmies seem to think should be done, so that the bed becomes the shape of a hammock without any of its back-saving resilience.

It was not thirty feet from one side of the camp to the other, and 000
the forest closed in a protective wall all around us. Kenge and I set off to see what the surrounding country was like, and soon we were far beyond the sounds of any voices other than our own. Everywhere we went we saw mushrooms and nuts and berries, and we collected

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pull herself over to the swing, slowly and painfully, and hoist herself almost upright by catching onto the vine with her hands, using what strength she had left in her good leg, which was fast withering through lack of use. It suddenly occurred to me to ask Kenge why Pygmies never made crutches. He said that they either got better with the use of a stick, or else they just crawled until they died. "What good is anyone who can't walk?" he asked.

I went to Asofalinda and asked her if she would let me try to teach Lizabeti to walk on crutches. The old woman was in one of her most truculent moods and severely said no. The white doctor had tried once, and Lizabeti had only got worse. Besides, the one leg was completely disjointed now, she said, and the other would be equally useless soon. I tried to explain that I was not going to try to cure the girl but just to help her get around more easily. Asofalinda asked me what crutches were like, but then she immediately became severe again and said that everyone knew it was impossible to walk on one leg.

I went off into the forest with Kenge and we cut two pairs of crutches, carefully choosing sticks with a wide fork that would not pinch under the arm. Then we cut a third pair, the right size for Lizabeti. We padded the forks with leaves. I showed Kenge how to use them, holding one leg doubled up behind me. He was delighted and was soon swinging himself unsteadily over the ground. When I thought that we both had had enough practice we returned to the camp and showed the sticks to Asofalinda, explaining them to her. We then performed, circling the camp twice without mishap. By this time the children were shrieking encouragement, and parents came running to see what the noise was all about. We performed once again for Masisi. When Asofalinda still hesitated Masisi simply went into her hut, grabbed the terrified Lizabeti and carried her outside. He told Asofalinda that this was not medicine, it was just common

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734 481 123 sense, and she must not refuse. Did she want her child to die like other cripples who had been unable to fend for themselves?

Reluctantly she agreed, but Lizabeti, as soon as I reached for her, burst into tears and dragged herself back into the farthest corner of her mother's hut. Masisi started to go in after her again, but Kenge called to him to leave her alone, and handed his crutches and those we had made for Lizabeti to the eagerly waiting children. Soon it was the most popular game in the camp. Even Masisi and Maipe tried "walking on one leg." I saw Lizabeti's tear-stained face peering from the door of her hut to watch.

The next morning Asofalinda came over to me and said that Lizabeti wanted to try this new game, but if she fell once she would never be allowed to try again. Not a soul left the camp that morning; they all wanted to see what would happen. Between us Kenge and I lifted the girl, who was bravely trying not to cry, and put the crutches under her arms. We showed her how to hold them with her hands at the sides, and how to take the weight off her good leg and swing it backward and forward. The greatest difficulty was getting her to trust that leg enough to move her crutches on in front of her. But little by little, moving one crutch at a time, she got more confidence. I went in front to catch her if she fell, and Kenge held her lightly around the waist from behind. Lizabeti began to walk. Kenge let go, and then, as she realized that Kenge was not even holding her, that she was actually walking upright, like the other children she had watched from the ground all her life, her face became contorted with fear and she stumbled. Kenge caught her just in time. He swung her high into the air with a triumphant shout to drown her wails of terror, and all the children joined in, laughing and chanting their congratulations.

734 481 123 We had almost completed a circle of the camp, and I looked over to see if Asofalinda had noticed Lizabeti start to fall. I was just in time 152 to see her bury her face in her hands, her whole body shaking as she

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sobbed her heart out—probably for the first time in her wonderful, hard-bitten old life.

The days that followed were full of happiness for everyone. Once Lizabeti got over her fright I made her practice regularly, to give her more strength in her good leg. She was soon able to stand up by herself, using the crutches for a lever. Not once did she fall. And the other children cut themselves crutches so that they could join in the fun, and together they found a new world of delight. When I was not coaxing Lizabeti to use her crutches more and more, someone else was, for everyone was anxious to see her fly over the ground just like Kenge, who by now was a master acrobat on his crutches, from which he refused to be parted.

In other respects, however, the camp became less pleasant, at any rate for me. The bees began to come in droves after their stolen honey. All day long they buzzed angrily around, so that we kept smoky fires in our huts night and day.

Almost every hour someone returned from a secret forage, with leaf bundles tied to his belt, dripping the sticky liquid down his legs. Sometimes it was too liquefied to be eaten, and then the whole bundle was simply dipped into a bowl of clear forest water, making a sweet-tasting drink. But far more popular was the whole comb which could be eaten grubs, larvae, bees and all. If it was very hard, it was first softened over the fire, and this made the grubs squirm more actively so that the honey worked its own way down your throat. It was, however, the best-tasting honey of all, despite the insects.

Apuma was yet another kind of honey, which came later in the season. It was full of grubs too, but they were all dead, and the honey had fermented. It was made by a different kind of bee and tasted like a bitter liqueur; if eaten in any quantity it could be highly intoxicating. But the Pygmy needs no stimulant in the honey season. He is drunk with the forest, with its beauty and abundance, and with the love it showers on its people. Every night that tiny